

Israeli spy suspects due back in court in Cyprus Sunday

NICOSIA (AFP) — Two Israelis held on suspicion of spying in Cyprus since last weekend will be brought before magistrates again Sunday, police said Friday. "As far as I know they will be brought before the court on Sunday at Lamaca (a southern resort town) which issued the first remand," police spokesman Glafcos Xenos told AFP. Xenos said it was now unlikely that the men would be formally charged at the hearing originally planned. The two men, identified in their passports as Uzi Angov, 37, and Igal Damari, 49, had been refusing to answer police questions which meant the investigation had been progressing slowly, he said. "All indications of the investigation seem to point to a further detention order," Xenos said. For security reasons the two Israelis are being kept in two separate police stations and Israeli authorities initially tried to deal quietly with the affair but it was quickly.

Jordan Times

An independent Arab political daily published by the Jordan Press Foundation
جوردان تايمز يومية سياسية تصدر بالانكليزية عن المؤسسة الصحفية الأردنية «الراي»

Arafat receives Wye accord letter from Clinton

NABLUS (AFP) — U.S. President Bill Clinton told Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat Friday that Washington will do everything possible to get the Wye River accord implemented, an advisor to the Palestinian National Authority (PNA) chief said. Clinton's letter promising to make every effort to get the Israeli-Palestinian October agreement implemented was handed to Arafat by U.S. Consul John Herbst, said Nabil Abu Rudeina. The U.S. president also explained in the message Washington's position on the Iraq crisis which began at the end of October when Baghdad halted all cooperation with U.N. weapons inspectors. Arafat gave Herbst a response for Clinton reiterating the PNA's position in favour of a diplomatic solution to the Iraqi standoff.

Volume 24 Number 6994

AMMAN SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 14, 1998, RAJAB 25, 1419

Price: Jordan 200 fils

Jordan celebrates King's birthday

AMMAN (J.T.) — Jordan today celebrates His Majesty King Hussein's 63rd birthday, an occasion marked with a public holiday and ceremonies all over the Kingdom involving different social and cultural activities organised by public and private institutions.

The streets of Amman and the other Jordanian towns and villages are bedecked with the King's portraits, the national flags and posters expressing good wishes to the King on his birthday and hopes for his quick and safe return home.

HRH Crown Prince Hassan, the Regent, will attend the main celebration at the King Hussein Sports City where he will make a speech to the nation.

The celebration at the Sports City includes artistic and cultural programmes as well as an airshow and music performances by an army band.

Accompanied by Prime Minister Faysal Tarawneh, ministers and officials, the Regent will later tour parts of the Amman Governorate where he will inaugurate a number of projects.

Nearly 20,000 students and representatives of various public and private organisations are taking part in the open celebration at the Sports City.

A special ministerial committee which had been entrusted with preparing for the celebrations said that the Ministry of Culture will hold a folklore performance at the Sports City Saturday under the Regent's patronage. The

King's birthday this year brings about double rejoicing for the Jordanian people who are delighted by reports of their leader's complete cure of his illness and his imminent safe return home.

The Jordanian people have already expressed their wishes to the King for a happy birthday and a safe return home through letters, banners and signatures on a huge 250-metre greetings card.

Since May 1953, when he assumed his constitutional powers, King Hussein has been leading the Kingdom through turbulent decades of conflict to achieve peace and stability for the region.

For over 45 years, King Hussein has been striving to serve his people and has succeeded in accomplishing many achievements at all levels and in all domains.

His endeavours at the political, economic and social levels coupled with his drive towards promoting democracy, political pluralism and respect for human rights have won him and the Kingdom high esteem at the regional and international levels.

Led by King Hussein, Jordan has succeeded in bolstering its ties with Arab and foreign countries and has maintained unique relations with the Palestinian people who the King has pledged to help regain their rights and their homeland.

On this happy anniversary the government declared Saturday and Sunday public holidays.

(Continued on page 7)

King says he is completely cured from lymphoma

AMMAN (J.T.) — His Majesty King Hussein on Friday confirmed earlier reports that he is completely cured of the lymph cancer that he fought against for the past four months at the Mayo Clinic in Minnesota.

"The situation is excellent," the King told Jordan Television in an interview last night.

"Chemotherapy is over and, thank God, there is no trace of the lymphoma," the King said.

He added, however, that his doctors are planning a marrow transplant to ensure that no traces of lymphoma may recur.

Expressing his anxiousness to meet his people, the King said: "God willing, I will be amongst you in the near future," noting that the courses of chemotherapy have ended 10 days ago.

The King said that his treatment has been carried out smoothly although it was quite difficult and hard.

"Although stages of treatment were quite hard and difficult they were nothing compared to one's morale. Thank God that everything is proceeding in a good manner. By

God's will, this will be the final stage after which I will return home," said the King.

Asked if he were watching Jordan Satellite Channel, King Hussein said he was and from time-to-time makes suggestions to improve its performance to enable it to reach all parts of the world in an effective and efficient manner.

A statement issued by His Majesty's physicians at the Mayo Clinic on Friday reaffirmed that the King was cured from lymphoma.

The statement, a copy of which was obtained by the Jordan Times, said:

"His Majesty is in complete remission from lymphoma. During the sixth, and final, treatment cycle which will start before the end of November, His Majesty's doctors will do an auto-transplant of His Majesty's own healthy stem cells which is a standard procedure to ensure a permanent remission."

Information Minister Nasser Judeh told the Jordan Times in an interview: "We are extremely delighted by the wonderful news about His Majesty's health and we should expect him back home in the last 10 days of December."



Regent conveys to King people's best wishes

AMMAN (J.T.) — His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan, the Regent, on Friday sent a message to His Majesty King Hussein on his 63rd birthday expressing his good wishes and those of the Jordanian people to the Monarch for a safe return home and long and happy life.

Following is the text of the message:

For the first time in your life, my brother, a life full of noble deeds, your birthday falls this year while you are away from home waging a battle for full and speedy recovery with God's will. With your resolve and your strong and relentless will, which never knew any form of submission except to God, to whom we, your united one Jordanian Arab family, who love you as king, father, brother and

friend, supplicate to God that He may bless you with good health so that you can pursue the march and lead us to new horizons marked with peace and characterised with pride and prosperity.

We express our allegiance to you, in memory of the Hashemites who shed their noble blood on Arab and Muslim soil in defence of right and in the face of

wrong and injustice.

We take deep pride in your reign and that of our fathers and grandfathers.

My dear brother, You have with great honour and faithfulness undertaken the great trust for over four decades and with God's blessings you will continue

to shoulder this trust because you, sir, is the best successor for the best predecessor. You place before your eyes the vision of the martyrdom of King Hussein Ben Ali, who has vowed never to cede or compromise what is right and passed away with a peaceful

mind and was buried in the Holy City of Jerusalem. His memory will serve as a beacon for the Arab Nation's renaissance and the commencement of the Arab Nation's march on the road to liberation and prosperity.

(Continued on page 7)

U.S. says it looks forward to end of Saddam's era

THE UNITED States built up its military muscle in the Gulf on Friday and said it looked forward to the end of the Saddam Hussein era in Iraq.

Expectations of U.S. air strikes intensified as warplanes and troops headed to the region to bolster an already potent force capable of attacking Iraqi targets in reprisal for Baghdad's refusal to comply with U.N. inspection demands.

President Bill Clinton, speaking at a White House event, said Saddam "still has it within his hands to end this crisis now" by resuming full cooperation with the weapons inspectors.

Secretary of State Madeleine Albright told reporters that one by one, diplomatic options have been rebuffed.

"Iraq has a simple choice: Reverse course or face the consequences," Albright said.

"We all want a peaceful outcome. But it was Saddam Hussein who forced the U.N. inspectors to stop their work, and only he can put them back on the job." Albright did little to conceal Washington's growing impatience and contempt for Saddam, noting the United States has begun funding dissident groups hoping to remove him.

"I have said a number of times, as have others, that we would look forward to working with a post-Saddam regime, and that we are and will even more actively work with opposi-

tion groups," she said. "The purpose, if we were to use force ... is pretty clear," Albright said, referring to the resumption of arms inspections.

"At the same time, we would look forward to working with somebody else."

In the past, such high-level pronouncements have been intended to signal dissidents inside and outside a government that Washington would support attempts to remove a head of state.

In New York, U.N. officials said Secretary General Kofi Annan has no plans to mediate the crisis with Iraq and is still waiting for Baghdad to resume cooperation with U.N. weapons inspectors.

The secretary-general's office and the U.N. Security Council made clear again that "the ball is in Iraq's court" and the resumption of unfettered weapons inspections is non-negotiable.

The secretary-general spoke to Clinton for 10 minutes Friday morning about Iraq's confrontation with the council, spokesman for the U.N. secretary general, Fred Eckhard, said.

Annan was scheduled to meet the 15-member Security Council later Friday after a private session with the ambassadors of Russia, China and France — who have been sympathetic to Iraq's call for lifting crippling U.N. economic sanctions.

(Continued on page 7)



On the occasion of

His Majesty King Hussein's Birthday

Arab Bank conveys its congratulations, and wishes His Majesty a speedy recovery and a safe return home.



ARAB BANK



Jordan Phosphate Mines Co.

conveys their congratulations and best wishes to

His Majesty King Hussein

on the occasion of his birthday,

praying to God that the King

returns home soon in the best of health



Jordan Petroleum Refinery Co.

conveys their congratulations to

His Majesty King Hussein

on the occasion of his birthday,

praying to God that the King

returns home soon in the best of health



U.S. embassy in Saudi warns Americans of possible attack

DUBAI (R) — The U.S. embassy in Saudi Arabia told Americans in the kingdom on Sunday there was a strong possibility of a "terrorist" attack on U.S. targets in the Gulf in the next month and advised them to exercise caution.

"The embassy has information indicating a strong possibility that terrorist elements are planning an attack against U.S. targets in the Gulf, possibly in the next thirty days," said the message to Americans.

A copy of the message was obtained by Reuters.

"All American citizens should remain alert to any suspicious activity and take precautionary steps to reduce the profile and vulnerability of any U.S. facilities," it said.

The embassy advised the 35,000 Americans living in the kingdom, including about 5,000 military personnel based there, to be vigilant, take steps to "increase their security awareness," maintain a low profile, vary travel routes and treat mail from unfamiliar sources with suspicion.

"Any suspicious activity, individuals or vehicles should be reported."

The message did not say who the "terrorist elements" were.

The message updates a warning on Nov. 13 of continuing threats of attacks by leading Saudi dissident Osama Ben Ladeo against Americans in Saudi Arabia.

The Saudi dissident has been indicted for attacks on Americans, including the August bombings of the U.S. embassies in Kenya and Tanzania.

Five Americans were killed by a car bomb at a U.S.-run military training

centre in Riyadh in 1995 and in 1996 a truck bomb at a U.S. military housing complex in the eastern city of Dhahran killed 19 U.S. servicemen.

Saudi Interior Minister Prince Nayef was quoted early in November as saying Ben Laden did not mastermind the two attacks.

He did not rule out that people adopting Ben Laden's Islamist ideology may have carried out the bombings.

Security has since been stepped up at official U.S. complexes in the kingdom.

Turkey's Ecevit searches for minority government backers

ANKARA (R) — Turkish leftist Bulent Ecevit on Monday starts searching for backers for a minority government, a bid the opposition says is doomed and big business fears will bring weak leadership during economic hard times.

If he succeeds, the government would be Turkey's sixth since 1995 and destined to last only until April 1999, when general elections are scheduled, 20 months before they are due.

"We can do this," Ecevit told the conservative Cumhuriyet newspaper on Sunday. "I don't think there will be a problem either from

the point of view of democracy or of time."

The main opposition Islamists disagree.

"The wish for a minority government is an empty expense of effort," Anatolia news agency quoted Islam-based Virtue Party leader Recai Kutan as saying.

Business leaders and unions, seeing dark clouds of recession on the horizon, have called for a strong government to guide the country. They fear a minority government would be an ineffectual stop-gap as the country drifts toward polls and economic rot.

But Ecevit's options are

limited. He is a secularist opposed to allowing the Islamists into power and two conservative parties are divided by personal acrimony.

The political instability comes against a backdrop of growing economic gloom.

The caretaker government of conservative Mesut Yilmaz on Friday unveiled measures to shield the economy. The government is to increase the capital of Turkey's export-import bank Eximbank to boost stagnant exports through cheap loans.

Turkish banks and financial institutions are to be exempted from a six percent Resource Utilisation and

Support Fund charge in their foreign borrowings.

Ecevit begins his search for support with a minor conservative leader early on Monday. The leftist, a prime minister in the 1970s, says he will talk to everyone, including the deeply distrusted Islamists.

If Ecevit fails, Demirel can appoint his own interim administration, but the constitution obliges him to give the Islamists, the biggest group in parliament, the most seats in the cabinet.

Pressure from the secularist military forced the collapse of an Islamist-led government in 1997.



CLASHES IN WEST BANK: A Palestinian man throws a rock with a slingshot Sunday at Israeli troops in the West Bank. Undercover Israeli police agents had arrested three Palestinians for stone-throwing during clashes at an area on the border with Jerusalem. Clashes were also reported in Bethlehem as U.S. President Bill Clinton met with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu to try to salvage the Wye River peace accords (Reuters photo)

Turkish air force chief visits Israel

TEL AVIV (AFP) — Turkish air force chief General Ilhan Kilic arrived in Israel on Sunday for a three-day visit.

Kilic will visit air force bases and weapons factories accompanied by his Israeli counterpart General Eitan Ben Eliahu and will also meet President Ezer Weizman. Defence Minister Yitzhak Mordechai and army Chief-of-Staff Shaul Mofaz.

Israel and Turkey signed a military cooperation agreement in February 1996, triggering the anger of several Arab and Muslim countries.

They signed a \$630 million contract in November 1996 for the upgrading by Israeli Aircraft Industries of 54 F-4E Phantom fighter-bombers for the Turkish air force.

In September Israel signed a \$70 million contract with Turkey to upgrade 48 training jets.

In October, a Turkish newspaper reported an agreement under which Turkish firms will be involved in construction of a new type of ground-to-air missile, a more sophisticated version of Israel's Popeye.

The two countries have also carried out joint naval manoeuvres and air force training exercises under the cooperation pact.

Iran's press is battleground for the country's future

By Scheherazade Faramarzi
The Associated Press

TEHRAN — Waving old copies of the banned liberal newspaper *Tous*, Iranian youths at a pro-democracy rally shouted as if they were fans at a soccer match: "Give us back the freedom paper."

"Freedom, forever," they yelled, their voices getting louder and angrier.

"Yazdi, resign, resign," they chanted, referring to Ayatollah Mohammad Yazdi, who as the head of the powerful judiciary is behind the closure of about half a dozen newspapers and the arrests of several journalists.

The reason behind the anger is that Iran's newspapers are at the centre of the battle over the country's future between President Mohammad Khatami and the hard-line clerics who oppose his efforts to liberalise government and society.

The newspapers do not just cover the news, they are the news.

Since Iran has no formal political parties, most of Tehran's 37 papers have become stand-in parties — each with its own platform — in what has become the liveliest democratic debate the country has ever seen.

The moderates claim about a dozen newspapers — the most popular being *Salam*, *Hamshahri*, *Zan*, *Jahan-e-Islam*, *Asr-e-Ma* and *Arya*.

The hard-line papers include *Kayhan*,

Resalat, *Jomhuri Islami*, *Shalamcheh* and *Abzar*. *Shalamcheh* reflects the extremist views of the Ansar-e-Hizbolah, a vigilante group that regularly breaks up pro-democracy rallies and attacks dissidents.

The outspoken *Tous*, closed down in September, has become a symbol in the struggle for a free press. Its editor, Masallah Shamsolvaezin, says the liberal papers started after Khatami's election are being attacked by hard-liners to undermine the president.

"They were unable to fight him directly, so they attacked his achievements to weaken him," said Shamsolvaezin.

"I believe that Mr. Khatami's programme of free expression has suffered a serious stroke and it is now in intensive care," said Shamsolvaezin, whose paper had a circulation of 300,000, the second largest in Iran.

Shamsolvaezin, who was jailed along with three other senior colleagues, said 30 vigilantes stormed his newspaper in September "by jumping over the wall," blindfolding them and making them stand against the wall.

"It was very uncivilised," he said at his Tehran home shortly after his release.

Tous' struggle to survive is typical of how the battle between moderates and hard-liners over Iran's future is being fought.

The paper began publishing with the

name *Jameh* after Khatami became president in August 1997. A court order, alleging libel and fabrication of stories, closed it down last June.

It then reappeared under two other names — *Tous* and *Aftab-e-Enrooz* — after being given new licences to publish by the Ministry of Culture and Guidance, which is under Khatami's control.

Each time it was shut down by the judiciary, which is run by the hard-liners.

The paper was first closed after it reported that the commander of the Revolutionary Guards Corps, Gen. Rahim Safavi, told his troops in private meeting to "cut out the throats and tongues" of the liberal press.

But *Tous* had a stormy relationship with the hard-liners from the start, partly because it questioned the absolute powers of Iran's supreme leader, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei.

The paper was closed for good June 16, a day after Khamenei ordered the judiciary to get tough with newspapers that he claimed had abused press freedom. Several other publications, including the lively *Rah-e-Now*, also were closed.

Shamsolvaezin won't apologise for questioning the leader's absolute powers and demands to know the legal reason his paper was shut down.

"The constitution stipulates that the leader is like any other citizen before the law," he said. "What did we do wrong? What did we violate? Give us a constitutional reason why and where we acted against the law."

But even some moderates say *Tous* went too far in attacking the right-wing clerics.

"*Tous* marched ahead with a sharp object and plunged it right into their stomachs," said Abbas Abdol, editor of the liberal daily *Salam*.

Some journalists also say *Tous* miffed Khamenei because it ignored an unspoken rule of Iranian newspapers — dedicating the top of the front page and a few inside columns to news about the leader and senior clerics.

But Ali Movahedi Savaji, a hard-line member of parliament, says the judiciary acted totally under the law in banning *Tous*.

"Over the past year, we gave them 114 warnings that they were violating the law. The press is free, but at the same time laws have to be obeyed," said Savaji.

Shamsolvaezin has a different view about so-called freedom in Iran following his jailing.

"We have freedom of expression in Iran," he said. "But the problem is freedom after expression."

Cairo press wants clashes to continue as Clinton visits

CAIRO (AFP) — The Cairo press called Sunday for Palestinians to continue violent clashes with Israeli troops as Bill Clinton prepares to make the first visit to the Palestinian territories by a U.S. president.

A resumption of the 1987-1993 "intifada" uprising against Israeli occupation is now the only way to force the right-wing government of Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu to respect Palestinian rights, the government newspaper *Al-Akhar* said.

"A resumed intifada is now the only way of dealing with the egomaniac Netanyahu, who believes he has the whole world at his command since the United States caved in the face of his arrogant pressure," the paper's editor, Galal Dawid, said in a front-page editorial.

"It is humiliating for the president of the world's most powerful country to give in to pressure from Netanyahu, the holder of a U.S. passport who was brought up in the back alleys of

New York, and go back on his decision to fly to Gaza on Air Force One," he said.

The U.S. president agreed to travel to the Gaza Strip by helicopter for his landmark visit Monday following huge pressure from Netanyahu who is desperate to deprive the visit of any implication of U.S. recognition of Palestinian sovereignty.

The Egyptian editor expressed his "joy at seeing the Israeli occupation forces terrorised by little stones."

Death sentences urged for Egyptian Islamists

CAIRO (AFP) — The prosecution in the case of 24 Islamists on trial for setting fire to video shops and planning acts of terrorism has called for the death sentence, court officials said Sunday.

The defendants, all members of the armed Islamic underground organisation *Gamaa Islamiya*, are accused of setting fire to four video

shops in Cairo and an advertising agency.

There were no casualties in the attacks against the video shops which Islamic militants regard as haram, or forbidden under religious law.

The accused are also charged with throwing explosives at police vehicles and police stations in the capital, injuring two policemen and a

civilian. In addition, they are accused of planning to assassinate a number of writers and pro-government journalists, including Ibrahim Nafeh and Ibrahim Saada, respectively chairmen of the *Al-Ahram* and *Al-Akhar* newspapers, and also the head of the journalists' union, Makram Mohammad Ahmad.

JORDAN TELEVISION

Tel. 4773111-19

PROGRAMME TWO

15:10Cartoon — Batman

15:30David Copper Field

16:00Drama — Neighbours

16:30 Des Chiffres Et Des Lettres

17:00Thalassa

18:15 Drama — Wind at My Back

19:00Le Journal

19:15French Programme

19:30News headlines

19:35The Parenthood

20:00Doc. — The Internet Cafe

20:30Drama — Big Sky

21:30Encounter

22:00News in English

22:30Drama — The Fix

23:30 Comedy — Keeping Up Appearance

23:59End of TX.

PRAYER TIMES

05:00Fajr

06:23(Sunrise) Duha

11:30Dhuhr

14:15Asr

16:38Maghreb

18:00Isha

CHURCHES

St. Mary of Nazareth Church Sweifish, Tel. 5930740

Assemblies of God Church Tel. 4632785

St. Joseph Church Tel. 4624590

Terra Sancta Church Tel. 4622366

Anglican Church Tel.

05:00Fajr

06:23(Sunrise) Duha

11:30Dhuhr

14:15Asr

16:38Maghreb

18:00Isha

JORDAN TIMES DAILY GUIDE AND CALENDAR

DEPARTURES

Royal Jordanian (RJ) Flights

06:30Beirut (RJ)

10:30Frankfurt, London (RJ)

11:00Istanbul (add) (RJ)

11:00Amsterdam, Chicago (RJ)

12:05Kuwait (RJ)

12:30Cairo (RJ)

17:20Jeddah (add) (RJ)

20:15Bahrain, Doha (RJ)

20:45Abu Dhabi (RJ)

21:15Muscat, Dubai (RJ)

21:20Dammam (RJ)

22:00Tel Aviv (add) (RJ)

22:00Tehran (RJ)

22:45Sanaa (RJ)

Other Flights

06:00Istanbul (TK)

07:25Paris (AF)

09:05London (BA)

10:30Cairo (MS)

11:05Istanbul (SD)

14:10Bahrain (GF)

15:30Vienna (OS)

15:35Frankfurt (LH)

16:30Dubai (EK)

18:50Khartoum (SD)

20:00Beirut (ME)

23:10Tel Aviv (LY)

02:25Amsterdam (KL)

02:45Athens (OA)

ARRIVALS

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HOSPITALS

AMMAN:

The Arab Centre for Heart and Special Surgery5921199

The Islamic, Abdil5665137

Hussein Medical Centre5856856

Lazrila4630195

Khalidi Maternity4644281/6

Akileh Maternity4642441/2

Jabal Amman Maternity4642362

Malhas, J. Amman4636140

Palestine, Shumastani5607071

Stimelani Hospital5607431

Jordan Hospital5607550

University Hospital5353444

Al-Muasher Hospital5667227/9

Al-Ahli, Abdali5664164/6

Italian, Al-Muhajreen4771013/3

Al-Bashir4775111/26

Army, Marka4891611/15

Queen Alia Hospital5157100

Amal Hospital5607155

Al-Azhar Cancer Centre5353000

ZARQA:

Zarqa Govt. Hospital(09)83323

Zarqa National Hospital(09)900560

EMERGENCIES

Food Control Centre4637111

Civil Defence Department5661111

Civil Defence Immediate Rescue4630341

Civil Defence Emergency199

Rescue Police 192, 4621111, 4637777

Fire Brigade4617101

Blood Bank4775121

Highway Police5343402

Traffic Police4896390

Public Security Dept4630321

Hotel Complaints5605800

Price Complaints5661176

Water & Sewage Complaints 487467

Amman Municipality Complaints4787111

Telephone Information (directory assistance)121

Overseas Calls0132

Central Amman Telephone Repairs4623101

USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS NIGHT DUTY

AMMAN:

Dr. Youssef Rashid4875792

Dr. Ahmad Manna5359413

Dr. Walid Al Masri5675485

Dr. Khalil Jhal4784450

WEATHER

Bulletin supplied by the Department of Meteorology

Temperatures are expected to rise slightly, skies partly cloudy, and winds southeasterly moderate. Scattered showers are expected over the northern regions in the afternoon. In Aqaba, it will warm, cloudy, winds northerly moderate to active, and seas calm.

Min/Max temp.

Amman06/17

Aqaba14/24

Deserts03/19

Jordan Valley13/23

Yesterday's high temperatures:

Amman 14 Aqaba 22 Humidity readings: Amman 39 per cent, Aqaba 45 per cent.

Following are the temperatures expected today in the following areas:

Ajlunt05/15

Jerash07/19

Um Qays08/19

Madaba06/18

Petra07/18

Dead Sea14/26

ROYAL JORDANIAN DAILY GUIDE AND CALENDAR

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Malhas, J. Amman4636140

Palestine, Shumastani5607071

Stimelani Hospital5607431

Jordan Hospital5607550

University Hospital5353444

Al-Muasher Hospital5667227/9

Al-Ahli, Abdali5664164/6

Italian, Al-Muhajreen4771013/3

Al-Bashir4775111/26

Army, Marka4891611/15

Queen Alia Hospital5157100

Amal Hospital5607155

Al-Azhar Cancer Centre5353000

ZARQA:

Zarqa Govt. Hospital(09)83323

Zarqa National Hospital(09)900560

EMERGENCIES

Food Control Centre4637111

Civil Defence Department5661111

Civil Defence Immediate Rescue4630341

Civil Defence Emergency199

Rescue Police 192, 4621111, 4637777

Fire Brigade4617101

Blood Bank4775121

Highway Police5343402

Traffic Police4896390

Public Security Dept4630321

Hotel Complaints5605800

Price Complaints5661176

Water & Sewage Complaints 487467

Amman Municipality Complaints4787111

Telephone Information (directory assistance)121

Overseas Calls0132

Central Amman Telephone Repairs4623101

USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS NIGHT DUTY

AMMAN:

Dr. Youssef Rashid4875792

Dr. Ahmad Manna5359413

Dr. Walid Al Masri5675485

Dr. Khalil Jhal4784450

WEATHER

Bulletin supplied by the Department of Meteorology

Temperatures are expected to rise slightly, skies partly cloudy, and winds southeasterly moderate. Scattered showers are expected over the northern regions in the afternoon. In Aqaba, it will warm, cloudy, winds northerly moderate to active, and seas calm.

Min/Max temp.

Amman06/17

Aqaba14/24

Deserts03/19

Jordan Valley13/23

Yesterday's high temperatures:

Amman 14 Aqaba 22 Humidity readings: Amman 39 per cent, Aqaba 45 per cent.

Following are the temperatures expected today in the following areas:

Ajlunt05/15

Jerash07/19

Um Qays08/19

Madaba06/18

Petra07/18

Dead Sea14/26

New Arabic, English newspapers receive licences

By Alia Shukri Hamzeh

AMMAN — Two new dailies obtained publishing licences from the government Thursday and are expected to hit newsstands within the next two months, bringing the total number of dailies in the Kingdom to seven.

According to Ramzi Khouri, general manager of one of the new dailies, the English-language Arab Daily, both newspapers obtained their licences in the name of the National House for Press and Publications Company, which publishes Al Arab Al Yawm.

However, while the second daily, an Arabic-language paper slated to be named "Al Masa'iah," is fully owned by the company, the Arab Daily seems to have more than one shareholder.

The National House Company is one of many publishing companies in Jordan. It has shares in Al Arab Al Yawm daily and Shihani weekly.

The chief editor of Al Masa'iah, Bassem Sakjha, told the Jordan Times earlier that he expected the paper's first edition to appear early December, adding that the difference between it and the other four Arabic dailies is that it would hit newsstands in the evening.

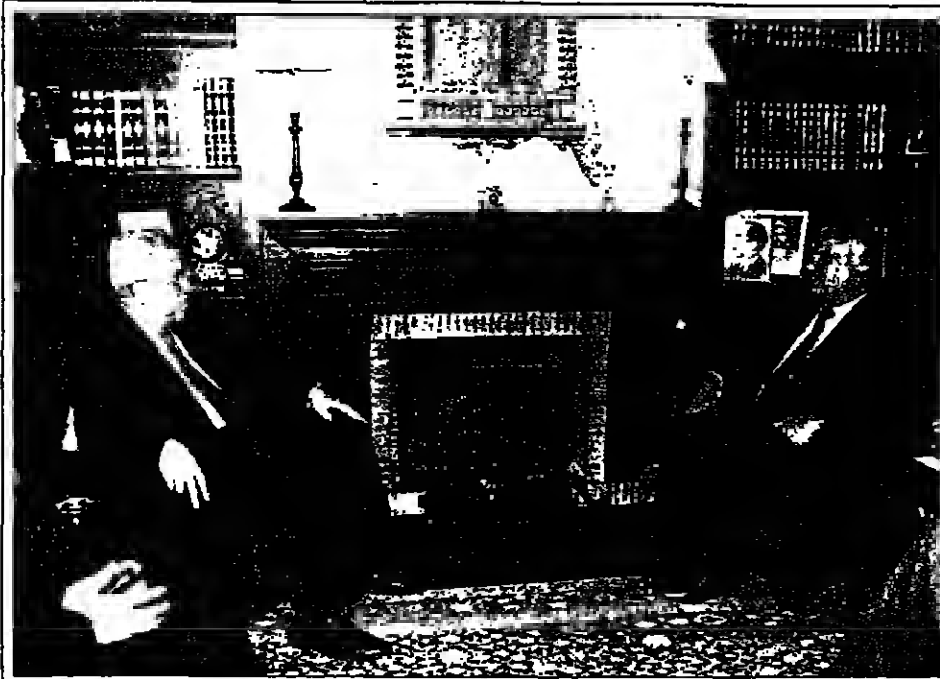
"By publishing late in the afternoon, we will benefit from the time difference with the United States and many other foreign countries," Sakjha said.

"The evening daily will be putting the Press and Publications Law and the government to the test by tackling issues in a totally open manner... but of course we will be dealing with these issues within the boundaries of the law," Sakjha added.

Khouri meanwhile said the Arab Daily will be editorially independent from Al Arab Al Yawm.

He said he expected the first edition of the newspaper to hit newsstands in early January.

The Arab Daily will be the second English daily after the Jordan Times, which was established in 1975.



REGENT MEETS WITH ABBAS: His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan, the Regent, meets with Palestine Liberation Organisation Secretary General Mahmoud Abbas (Abu Mazen) to discuss coordination between Jordan and Palestine and the peace process' latest developments (Photo by Boghos)

Responsible media, free press necessary for stronger civil society — Regent

By Caroline Faraj

AMMAN — A responsible media and a free press are necessary for institutional building in civil society and for strengthening democracy, His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan, the Regent, has said.

"We want a free press that would contribute, as one of the civil society institutions, to the development and nation-building process," Prince Hassan said during a meeting with journalists on Thursday.

The Crown Prince emphasised the importance of "responsible freedom" in dealing with national issues. "We all agree that the worst type of freedom is the one that tries to be free of responsibility... and this requires respect for the truth, fairness, credibility and objectivity in dealing with national issues," he said.

Prince Hassan reiterated his call for the establishment of information centres to monitor socio-economic conditions and help journalists and decision-makers perform their

duties.

"I believe that we need to set-up national information centres that would serve as fora for dialogue and exchange of views between all sectors of society," he said.

The Regent also said dialogue in itself is not an aim but rather an instrument for dealing with national problems in a comprehensive way, based on accuracy and participation of all sectors.

He added that despite the fact that dialogue had intensified since the resumption of parliamentary life and the proliferation of political parties, research and study centres and newspapers after 1989, Jordan has not yet reached a framework for a comprehensive political, social and economic dialogue.

The Regent highlighted the need for a clear strategy of vision for dialogue that would be shared by all sectors in Jordan and be "selective in the choice of certain topics over others. Such topics which are not necessarily based on facts and realities might come at the expense of the national interest."

The Crown Prince also noted that the government has a genuine desire to hold a dialogue with all political parties in order to achieve comprehensive understanding and cooperation among all political and social forces in the Kingdom.

He also emphasised the importance of respecting different opinions and the need for framing political and ideological differences in a respectful and constructive manner.

Prime Minister Fayez Tarawneh, who also attended the meeting, called for a clear agenda for dialogue covering all aspects. "The next step will be a national comprehensive dialogue with the participation of all sectors... the government is not going to take the lead."

Thursday's meeting was a part of a comprehensive dialogue among all sectors of society that Prince Hassan launched this summer by holding separate meetings with politicians, young entrepreneurs, members of the judiciary, representatives of the Muslim Brotherhood and women's organisations.

Regent, EU delegation discuss Wye River deal, Iraq situation

Crown Prince, Norwegian FM call for diplomatic solution to Iraq standoff

AMMAN (J.T.) — His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan, the Regent, Thursday met with a European Union delegation headed by Austrian Foreign Minister Wolfgang Schüssel and expressed Jordan's appreciation of EU efforts towards peace and stability in the Middle East.

The Jordan News Agency, Petra, said the Regent reviewed the implementation of last month's Israeli-Palestinian land-for-security deal and means of EU support for the peace process, both political and economic.

At the meeting, which was attended by EU Middle East envoy Miguel Moratinos, Prince Hassan emphasised the need to implement the Wye River accord and to avert the repercussions to the region in the event of a military confrontation involving Iraq.

The EU foreign ministers announced earlier this month that the union is "prepared to

be completely associated with the implementation of the accord and to help solve questions regarding the final status" of the Palestinian territories.

Petra said the Regent noted the common benefits of EU-Jordanian economic and trade cooperation and the opportunities such cooperation can yield.

For his part, Schüssel, whose country holds the rotating presidency of the EU, said Austria is keen on strengthening cooperation with Jordan in economic and investment fields.

Present at the meeting were Prime Minister Fayez Tarawneh, Foreign Minister Abdul Ilah Khatib, Minister of Planning Nabil Amnari and a number of other senior officials.

Schüssel, who is on a regional tour that will also include the Palestinian territories, Syria, Lebanon and

Egypt, left Friday for Israel. Also Thursday, the Regent and Norwegian Foreign Minister Knut Vollebaek held talks on the Iraq situation and the Palestinian territories.

Prince Hassan and Vollebaek also reviewed issues of common concern at the meeting, which was attended by Royal Court Chief Jawad Anani and Khatib.

The Regent called for the implementation of the Wye River accord and for the peace process to be given impetus in order to pave the way for a comprehensive and lasting settlement.

Assessing the important role of the EU in the region's development, the Regent said Jordan is keen on pursuing efforts to develop its relations with European nations in all fields.

For his part, Vollebaek said Norway was concerned with further strengthening its cultural, trade and economic rela-

tions with the Kingdom.

Earlier Thursday, the Norwegian minister met with Tarawneh and Khatib to review the peace process and the situation in Iraq.

The two sides urged both Iraq and the U.N. to try to "find a diplomatic solution to avoid another war."

Petra said the two sides stressed the need for supporting the United Nations Relief and Works Agency in its efforts towards serving the Palestinian refugees and overcoming its current financial difficulties.

After the talks, Khatib accompanied Vollebaek on a visit to Hittin refugee camp, where they inspected a health clinic, a centre for women's activities and a local school run by UNRWA.

The Norwegian minister is on the first leg of a Middle East tour that will also take him to Egypt, Israel and the Palestinian territories.

Regional tension should not harm investment in Jordan — U.S. official

Daley pledges to address Jordanian-Palestinian trade during tour

By Amy Henderson

IRBID — As 23 U.S. combat ships and another aircraft carrier cruised towards the Gulf, a senior American official visiting Jordan contended that a military confrontation with Iraq should not be a hindrance to direct foreign investment.

U.S. Secretary of Commerce William Daley, on a two-day visit to the Kingdom, said that the superpower was committed to supporting Jordan's listing economy and that the latest tension created by U.S.-British threats to strike Iraq unless cooperation with UNSCOM was resumed should not detract foreign investors.

"There is a market here, regardless of the tension," said Daley in a meeting with the press following a tour of the Qualifying Industrial Zone (QIZ) at Irbid. "This is not the first time that tension erupts... This problem will be overcome at some point."

Jordan, which relies mainly on Iraq for oil, is concerned that its oil security may be compromised by a U.S.-led strike on the Iraq and anti-

pates a humanitarian crisis with a new onslaught of refugees from its eastern neighbour, concerns that Daley said the U.S. is acutely aware of.

"There is a very strong awareness in the government and by President [Bill] Clinton, not only of this situation which is possibly before us, but also of the tremendous role that the King played in the Wye process," Daley said.

"[The parties] involved, including the U.S., feel a debt of gratitude for [His Majesty] King Hussein, and if there are any consequences as a result of any action authorised by the U.N., then I think our government and other governments that support that action would be receptive to trying to find ways to alleviate any additional pain that would come to the Jordanian people [as a result of military action against Iraq]."

The commerce secretary is on a week-long visit to the Middle East to identify U.S. business opportunities in the region and to bolster regional economic cooperation in the wake of the Wye River accord.

Both Daley and his counterpart in Jordan, Minister of Trade and Industry Mohamad Saleh Hourani, said they were optimistic that several impediments to both trade and investment could be removed at an upcoming meeting between Jordanian, Palestinian and Israeli trade ministers in the Gaza Strip on Monday.

Hourani said he had received a commitment from the U.S. side to work to open Palestinian markets.

Jordan, since signing trade agreements with both the Palestinians and Israel in 1996 and 1995, respectively, has complained that Israel has impeded trade with the West Bank through a string of non-tariff barriers, particularly with non-transparent security checks and controls.

The World Bank has identified the ability to export to the West Bank market as "vital" to the rejuvenation of Jordan's economy, ailing since the imposition of sanctions on Iraq, the country's largest bilateral trading partner. In 1997, Jordan's volume of trade with the West Bank stood at \$30

million annually, only one third of which were Jordanian exports, according to the Ministry of Trade and Industry. Israel exports roughly \$2 billion per annum to the Palestinians.

"[Jordan's] opportunities in the West Bank should be greater than they are," Daley said. "This is something I will be addressing during my travels. We will try to determine which of these [obstacles] are legitimate security concerns, and which are protectionist concerns of [business interests in Israel]."

He said the U.S. administration "felt that [it] could take steps" to remove obstacles that "conflict with the free flow of goods and workers," but did not specify those measures.

During his visit, Daley also met with His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan, the Regent, Prime Minister Fayez Tarawneh, and the governor of the Central Bank, Ziad Fariz. Daley left Amman yesterday for Lebanon, and will travel from there to Tel Aviv before the quadrilateral meeting in Gaza.

Officials hope to strike Petra 'treasure' trove

By Dominic Evans
Reuters

PETRA — Two hundred years ago, a Western visitor to the fabled city of Petra had to travel in disguise and dupe his bedouin guide into revealing its striking rose-red ruins.

Dressed as a Muslim pilgrim, Johann Burckhardt slipped past tribesmen who for centuries had jealously kept outsiders from its ornate temples and tombs, believing they contained undiscovered treasures.

Burckhardt only "discovered" the remote 2,000-year-old city, which had quietly dropped out of sight after the Crusades, after years of preparation and an arduous trek through the stark sandstone hills of southern Jordan.

These days following in his footsteps is less of a sweat.

New roads and hotels have put Petra firmly on the map and a flurry of renovation has underlined its position at the heart of Jordan's \$900 million a year tourism industry.

Officials recognise that Petra's real "treasure" is not a mythical stash of undiscovered loot hidden in one of the caves and tombs carved into its mountainside, but the steady flow of tourist dollars it draws into government coffers.

"We are hoping with this infrastructure and promotion... to reach half a million or 600,000 visitors [a year] in two years' time," Kamel Mahadin, director of the Petra Regional Planning Council, told Reuters.

That would represent a five-fold increase in the 100,000 annual visitors just a decade ago, and a sizeable jump from the 380,000 who visited in 1997.

Unlike Burckhardt, who camped out in Petra for just one night before his suspicious guide rushed him off on the long desert trek to Cairo, modern visitors are encouraged to linger longer at the Nabataean city, once one of the richest trading capitals of the ancient world.

Last year, Mahadin's efforts were rewarded with a rise in the average number of nights which tourists stayed in Petra to 1.6 from 1.2 in 1996.

That's the good news.

Tourists scared away

A combination of domestic unrest in the second half of 1996, stalemate in Arab-Israeli peace talks and a series of show-downs between neighbouring Iraq and the United Nations took their toll on the total number of visitors in 1997.

A massacre of tourists in the Egyptian city of Luxor also hit Petra — the national holiday and 500 km which separate the two sites make little difference to tourists who view "terrorism" as endemic to the whole region.

The bad news dragged the number of tourists down last year by 14 per cent from a record 440,000 in 1996.

Figures for the first eight months of 1998 showed another 17 per cent fall on last year, denting Mahadin's hopes for a surge into the new millennium.

"If fluctuates of course. It depends on Luxor, it depends on the political situation around us. But we don't anticipate the numbers falling any lower [this year] unless a major crisis comes up," Mahadin said.

Petra's place at the heart of Jordan's tourism industry — which is divided

roughly equally between Westerners on the trail of antiquities and Gulf Arabs escaping the Arabian Peninsula — is unchallenged.

In its peak year of 1996 it accounted for 90 per cent of combined gate receipts of all Jordan's Roman, biblical and other ancient sites.

New investments

The capital of an ancient trading kingdom, Petra saw a wave of investment in the 1990s, backed by money from Jordanians returning after the 1990 Gulf crisis. After the 1994 peace treaty with neighbouring Israel, businessmen ploughed more money in.

"In the last eight years investors have placed about 70 million dinars [\$100 million] worth of projects," Mahadin said.

Another \$100 million will be spent on government and internationally-funded projects for building roads, renovating sites and improving tourist facilities, he said.

The narrow crevice which winds between towering rock walls towards the old city has been restored, revealing original stone paving and life-size carvings of camels, reflecting Petra's historic role as a destination for trade caravans.

A Byzantine church has been covered, protecting its vivid mosaics, while work continues to excavate Petra's "temple" complex.

Petra hoteliers hope the restored sites will help draw more visitors. After a spurt of hotel building since 1990, annual hotel occupancy is just 35 per cent, with most hotels standing idle outside the spring and autumn high seasons.

Prussian prince concludes visit to Jordan

AMMAN (J.T.) — Prince Michel of Prussia yesterday concluded a several-day visit to Jordan during which he toured a number of tourist attractions and held "fruitful" talks with representatives of Jordanian companies on enhancing Jordanian-German cooperation in economic fields.

Prince Michel, the great grandson of German Kaiser Wilhelm II, met with representatives of several industrial companies to examine means of strengthening bilateral economic cooperation.

The talks focused on projects related to seaports, railways, the Disi-Amman water pipeline, a proposed Iraqi-Jordanian oil pipeline and another pipeline to pump water from the Euphrates River in Iraq to Jordan. Talks on these projects will be followed up to reach an agreement on carrying out the most feasible projects.

According to Prince Michel, one of the projects to be carried out as a joint Jordanian-German venture will be a major methanol plant in Aqaba, methanol produced at the plant will be sold to German companies in view of the great demand for the product in Germany, said the prince.

"Our purpose is to promote a big methanol plant in Aqaba along with German industrial firms, mainly Lurgi, which is one of the leading firms specialised in this field," the prince told the Jordan Times.

The German prince, whose

visit marks 100 years since Kaiser Wilhelm visited Damascus. Thursday attended a show at a military camp in Zarqa.

"At a lunch at the Royal Court with HRH Prince Abdullah, we saw a German magazine showing a picture of my great grandfather entering Damascus... Prince Abdullah had the idea of having this visit to the Royal Guards camp and the show to mark the occasion," he said.

During his visit to Damascus, Wilhelm was shocked at the dismal state of the tomb of the great Muslim leader Salah Al Din and ordered it repaired. Kaiser Wilhelm II, emperor of Germany and King of Prussia in the period 1888-1916, had a great admiration for Salah Al Din and the Arabs and was emotionally attached to this part of the world, said Prince Michel.

"Just like my great grandfather, I have this love and admiration of the Arabs, and especially of Jordanians, and I am interested in further enhancing Jordanian-German relations," said the prince, who was accompanied on the visit to the Kingdom by his wife.

Prince Michel, whose great grandfather played a key role in the transformation of Germany from an agricultural to a major industrial state, said he will use his good relations with German companies to encourage them to invest in Jordan, "which is one of the most stable [countries] in the Arab World."



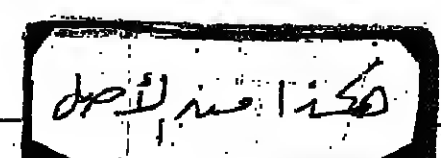
Prince Michel of Prussia

The Editor and Staff of the Jordan Times mourn the passing of

Nazmi Al Saeed

a long-time colleague at Al Ra'i newspaper.

May his soul rest in peace.



WHAT'S GOING ON

FILM

* "Trois hommes et un couffin" at the French Cultural Centre, Jabel Weibeh on Monday Nov. 16 at 6:30 p.m. and 8:30 p.m.

EXHIBITIONS

* Display of Jordan River Foundation (JRF) 1998 autumn/winter collection entitled "Falling Leaves" at the JRF showroom, Jabel Amman (Tel. 4613081), until Nov. 30.

* Crossroads of Civilisations: More Than 100 Years of German Archaeological Activities in Jordan (sponsored by the German Protestant Institute in cooperation with Petra Store Preservation) at the Royal Cultural Centre, until Nov. 28.

* A three-dimensional exhibition on canvas by Susana Caldwell, Darleen Karpowicz, and Rawabi Abu Ghazaleh Silawi at the Jordan Arts and Crafts Centre (Artsana), Jabel Amman, of the Second Circle, until Nov. 20 (Tel. 4647855).

* Exhibition of watercolours by Mukarram Haghdoudouq at Instituto Cervantes, Jabel Amman, until Nov. 24.

* "Masterworks of the Spanish Contemporary Architecture and Presentation of Architecture Guide: Spain 1920 - 2000" at the University of Jordan, Faculty of Engineering, until Nov. 20.

* Paintings by Jordanian artist Mohammad Abu Aziz at the French Cultural Centre, Jabel Amman, until Nov. 28.

Violence rocks Jakarta's streets

JAKARTA (R) — Chaos and death returned to the streets of Jakarta Friday, as the mass protest for reform in Indonesia once again deteriorated into violent confrontation with security forces.

At least five people were killed on the fifth day of street demonstrations, the most violent since savage riots in May, which culminated in the resignation of former President Suharto.

Friday, the Indonesian capital was rocked again as tens of thousands of people took over the centre of the city soon after Friday Islamic prayers.

Amid bails of rubber bullets and teargas and blasts from water cannon, demonstrators hurled uprooted street signs at security forces and set branches on fire in the middle of Jalan Sudirman, the city's main thoroughfare.

At least three people were killed in the afternoon when troops fired rubber bullets at the crowd and elsewhere in the city, two pro-government activists were killed by protesters.

At least seven people have died in the week of protests. The demonstrators' anger was targeted at the nearby meeting of the country's highest legislative body, the People's Consultative Assembly, which was holding its final plenary session Friday.

Although the assembly is due to approve a wide range of political reforms, the mostly student demonstrators want far more radical change than they believe authorities will allow.

But after the shootings on Jalan Sudirman, where most of the country's banks and major business houses have their headquarters, the stand-off between protesters and troops took on almost festive proportions.

Vendors selling cigarettes and sweets picked their way through the crowd, many of whom were sitting on their haunches on what is usually the busiest street in the city of 10 million people.

Groups of office employees stood on the street, smoking and talking into mobile telephones to friends elsewhere in the city.

"There are many problems in Indonesia," said a security guard from one of the banks along the street, who came out on the street from behind the barricaded gate of a multi-storey building to see what was going on.

"I don't know how this will all end," children from a nearby slum joined in the protest, steadily beating stones on the metal dividers in the middle of the street. Hundreds of people crowded onto an overpass which crosses Jalan Sudirman, peering down at the crowds

of protesters and rows of troops.

At the northern end of Jalan Sudirman, light tanks were placed along an intersection near the British embassy as well as near the presidential palace.

Protesters scattered when some 25 truck-loads of army reserve Kosrad troops came up from the rear to join other soldiers and police holding the front-line. But they soon regrouped and the troops made no further move to advance.

As dusk fell, some 5,000 protesters were still chanting and waving the Indonesian flag and singing anti-government songs.

They were grouped around the Amajaya Catholic University at the southern end of Jalan Sudirman, where the protest started. The site is just about one km from the parliament building, where the country's assembly is meeting.

The students and other protesters say the MPR will do little to move away from the practices of Suharto's government, because almost all of the assembly was virtually hand-picked by him.

Suharto, who ruled Indonesia for 32 years, quit in May after months of student-led protests and riots in which at least 1,200 people were killed.



Indonesian pro-government and anti-government supporters fight on Jakarta's main streets. Troops fired rubber bullets, teargas and bursts from water cannon to disperse thousands of students and anti-government protesters demanding more political reform. At least five people were killed and scores of protesters injured while the People's Consultative Assembly (MPR) was holding the last day of a four-day session to decide the country's political future (Reuters photo)

Reserve Marine officer being investigated for Clinton bashing

NEW ORLEANS (AP) — A U.S. Marine reserve officer is being investigated for writing an article in which he accuses President Bill Clinton of committing adultery and lying.

An inquiry has been ordered this week after the New Orleans-based Marine Forces Reserve learned of a Nov. 9 opinion piece in The Washington Times written by reserve Maj. Daniel J. Rahil, spokeswoman Maj. Paula Buckley said Thursday.

He is the third military officer to write disparaging comments about Clinton in a publication, and the second to be investigated.

Rahil, 34, joined the Marines in May 1986 and became a reserve officer in 1990. He is now attached to a unit based in Camp Pendleton, California.

"I'm a civilian and so I don't speak on behalf of the Marine Corps. It's a column I wrote on my

own, as a civilian," Rahil said Thursday. "It's not me against the Marine Corps and I don't want to paint this as a crusade I'm on to make the Marine Corps look bad. I love the Marine Corps."

In his article, Rahil expressed indignation over Clinton's record in office, called for his impeachment and described the president as "a lying draft-dodger" who has "always had contempt for the American military."

"Bill Clinton has always been a moral coward," Rahil wrote. "To subject our services to such debased leadership is nothing less than the collective spit of the entire nation upon our faces."

The Uniform Code of Military Justice prohibits those serving in the armed forces from making disparaging remarks about their civilian superiors.

Despite a stern reminder

about the code from top Pentagon officials last month, at least two other officers have called publicly for Clinton's removal over his relationship with White House intern Monica Lewinsky.

On Oct. 16, the Marine Corps began an investigation of Maj. Shane Sellers, a 20-year veteran who labelled Clinton an "adulterous liar" and "a criminal" in a letter published by the Navy Times.

And Army Col. John R. Baer lambasted Clinton in a letter published Oct. 12 in the Army Times, an independent paper, urging the commander-in-chief to stop issuing signed letters of appreciation to officers when they retire.

Maj. Gen. David Mize, who heads the inquiry into Rahil's article, said it would be inappropriate for him to comment on the matter while it is under review.

AIDS cases to balloon in Asia

HONG KONG (R) — International health experts Friday lashed out at Asian governments' ineffective approach to fighting AIDS, warning the disease was set to become a "huge epidemic" in the region.

Speaking to reporters in Hong Kong ahead of a three-day conference on AIDS in Asia, they said the disease was spreading fast in Asia even while it levelled off in the rest of the world.

"It will be an epidemic (in Asia). It is already an epidemic in some countries but it will be a major epidemic after three years when HIV will be levelling off almost all over the rest of the world," said I.S. Gilada, honorary secretary of the Indian Health Organisation.

HIV is the virus which causes AIDS, a disease that cripples the body's immune system and leaves it defenceless against secondary infections.

"If governments sit idle and don't act as they should, the problem will worsen," Gilada said. "The problems have gone to that level because governments have not acted as

they should have done," he said, adding that health had very low priority in the budget of most Asian governments.

Health experts cited denial and inaction on the part of governments in educating their populations about the disease and allocating adequate funding for healthcare programmes.

At the end of 1997, there were an estimated 6.2 million HIV-positive people in Asia, according to figures from the Joint U.N. Programme on HIV/AIDS.

In China and India — Asia's most heavily populated countries — HIV cases stood at 400,000 and 4.1 million at the end of 1997, and the figures were forecast to balloon to one million and 20 million respectively by the period 2000 to 2001.

But the worst-hit countries in the region are Thailand, Cambodia and Myanmar. According to U.N. data, those nations have a "very high" rate of HIV infection — between 1.01 and 2.4 per cent of the adult population.

In Cambodia, 2.4 per cent of the adult population is thought to be HIV positive,

but even that figure is probably grossly underestimated, said Gillian Hall, head of the HIV/AIDS department at the Sihanouk Hospital Centre of Hope in Cambodia.

"There is denial by the government who doesn't see it as a problem," Hall said. To add to the problem, "lots of myths, misinformation is being spread by brothel owners," she said.

Hall cited anecdotes where brothel owners had told customers that using condoms actually spreads HIV and that the best way to get rid of the disease is to have sex with as many people as possible.

Experts also blamed Asia's growing AIDS problem on poverty, illiteracy, ignorance and the proliferation of the sex industry.

Mark Ottenweller, director for Africa with Hope Worldwide, said Asia had all the ingredients for a worsening of the disease and was "going to deal with a huge AIDS epidemic."

Hope Worldwide is a U.S.-based non-governmental group that runs health related programmes in some 58 countries.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Convicted murderers publicly executed in Kabul

KABUL, Afghanistan (AP) — Women wailed while thousands of people watched Friday as two convicted murderers were publicly executed in the capital of Kabul, said eye witnesses. The relatives of their victims shot the two men, who were sentenced to death by the Taliban religious army's Supreme Court. Mohammad Mangal, from eastern Afghanistan, was shot three times by the relative of his victim, identified only as Atiqila. Under the Taliban's strict brand of Islamic law the relatives of victims are expected to carry out the death penalty. The relatives also have the option to forgive the murderers their crime. In both cases the family refused and the death sentence was carried out. Gulam Hussain was shot five times by the relative of his victim, identified as Shahpoor. The murder occurred in central Bamyan province, although it wasn't known when. Shahpoor's relatives shot Hussain five times with an automatic kalashnikov rifle, witnesses said. In 90 per cent of Afghanistan ruled by the Taliban criminals are publicly punished in keeping with the edicts laid out in the Muslim's holy book, the Koran. The remaining 10 per cent of Afghanistan is ruled by a northern-based alliance led by former military chief Ahmed Shah Massoud and ousted President Burhanuddin Rabbani. Convicted killers also were publicly executed during Rabbani's rule.

Police launch murder hunt after new child killing

LIEGE, Belgium (AFP) — A 10-year-old boy who was found dead in a public park here Thursday died from repeated blows to the head with a blunt object, police said Friday as a nationwide hunt for his murderer got under way. David Gebeles, who disappeared Wednesday after going out on his bike to meet friends, was discovered in the undergrowth of a park near his home. His throat and wrists had been cut, apparently with a knife. The shocking murder came just as Liege was beginning to recover from the trauma of the deaths of Julie Lejeune and Melissa Russo, two eight-year-olds from the city whose bodies were discovered in 1996 at the home of alleged serial child-killer Marc Dutroux. The two friends, abducted while playing, starved to death in a cellar while Dutroux was in police custody on suspicion of involvement in an insurance racket.

Custody battle brewing in baby switch

CHARLOTTESVILLE, Va. (UPI) — Both sets of grandparents of one of two girls switched at birth at the University of Virginia hospital apparently are fighting over custody of the girl and her sister. The maternal grandparents of 3-year-old Rebecca Chittum, whose parents died in a July 4 traffic accident, reportedly have filed a petition for sole custody and the paternal grandparents are expected to make a similar move. The Richmond (Va.) Times-Dispatch reports today that Thomas and Linda Rogers Monday filed the custody petition for Rebecca and her 1-year-old sister Lindsey, in Charlottesville. DNA tests this summer proved Rebecca was not the biological child of the parents who raised her, Kevin Chittum and Whitney Rogers. Rather, she apparently was switched at birth with Callie Marie Conley, who is being raised by Paula Johnson, Johnson and Carlton Conley are Rebecca's biological parents while Chittum and Rogers were Callie Marie's. Chittum and Rogers died before the switch was discovered during a child support dispute between Johnson and Conley. An investigation has not yet determined how the switch occurred. Rebecca's grandparents have been sharing the upbringing of the girls, with Rebecca and Lindsey living with the Rogerses for four months and then Rosa Lee and Larry Chittum for four months. The Chittums turn was to begin Tuesday and a hearing was held this week. The Rogers petition seeks sole custody, arguing it would provide the girls with a more stable environment, the newspaper said. Johnson has taken no part in the proceedings.

German prosecutors investigate three tenors in tax case

MANNHEIM, Germany (AP) — Prosecutors said Friday they were investigating whether the three tenors — Jose Carreras, Luciano Pavarotti and Placido Domingo — and star soprano Montserrat Caballe helped a German concert promoter evade taxes. Mannheim prosecutor Hubert Jobski said there were signs that the four may have been involved in the case against Matthias Hoffmann, but that the investigation had only just started and could take months. Hoffmann went on trial on fraud and tax evasion charges last month. He is accused of using unreported payments and shell companies in Ireland, London and elsewhere to evade almost 24 million marks (\$15 million) in German taxes. Hoffmann, who has been in investigative custody since July 30, 1997, has organised concerts with the three tenors and Caballe. Carreras' attorney, Gerhard Rau, called the investigation against the singer "nothing special" and said prosecutors were obliged to look into any charge Hoffmann made. Rau is also representing Carreras in a civil lawsuit against Hoffmann that opened in Mannheim Friday. Carreras charges he never received 400,000 marks (\$250,000) in fees for two 1997 concerts in Germany. A decision in the civil case is expected Dec. 4.

Georgia researcher attacks fallacy of marijuana treating glaucoma

AUGUSTA, Georgia (AP) — A person with glaucoma would have to smoke a marijuana cigarette every two hours — about 4,000 a year — to experience any medical benefits from the drug, according to new research. In a study published Thursday in the Archives of Ophthalmology, ophthalmologist Keith Green, a Medical College of Georgia researcher, attacks "the fallacy that marijuana is of any value at all in the treatment of glaucoma." Voters in Alaska, Arizona, Oregon, Nevada and Washington last week approved measures allowing use of marijuana for medical reasons. Those reasons range from reducing side effects of cancer chemotherapy to treating glaucoma. Glaucoma is a degenerative eye disease that affects between 2 per cent and 3 per cent of people and is more likely in those with a family history of the disease. The normal eye maintains a constant pressure of fluid, but glaucoma causes a chemical change that blocks the outflow, Green said. That leads to increased pressure that can lead to blindness. Chemicals in marijuana called cannabinoids do seem to help improve the outflow in about 60 per cent of the people who try it. But the pressure builds back up within four hours, Green said. In order to keep the pressure down, a person would have to smoke a joint every two hours, he said. "Smoking a joint a week is not going to cure glaucoma," said Green. Advocates for medical marijuana say even temporarily alleviating the pressure is better than doing nothing. "Should these patients suffer so?" asked Allen St. Pierre, executive director of the National Organisation to Reform Marijuana Laws Foundation.

Charles celebrates 50th birthday — without Camilla

LONDON (AFP) — Britain's Prince Charles Friday night was to celebrate his 50th birthday with a reception at Buckingham Palace thrown by Queen Elizabeth — without his long-time companion Camilla Parker Bowles.

In what has been interpreted as a mark of his mother's stern disapproval of the relationship, Parker Bowles is not expected to be among the 850 guests.

Instead, the woman whom Charles has called a "non-negotiable" part of his life, will host a glamorous party Saturday — the prince's actual birthday — at his

Highgrove country home in western England.

Thursday night, as three days of birthday celebrations kicked off, Parker Bowles was a guest at a gala dinner at Hampton Court Palace, arriving separately and sitting with friends, not at the top table with the prince.

But the date was yet another display of the relationship between Charles and Parker Bowles, which has flourished despite the hostile attitude of most of the British public and Queen Elizabeth herself.

Earlier this month she and Charles attended a society wed-

ding together, while late last month they issued their first joint public statement.

As Charles marks his half-century, he has been subject to an avalanche of embarrassing press reports concentrating on the question of his role as king-in-waiting, highlighting discords between mother and son.

A British television documentary Sunday quoted one of Charles's aides as saying the prince would be "privately delighted" if Queen Elizabeth were to abdicate, a claim Charles himself furiously denied.

The heir to the throne has made

a determined effort since the death of his ex-wife Diana in a Paris car crash last year to improve his public image.

But although his own popularity has risen, his relationship with Parker Bowles — the woman blamed by Diana for the breakdown of her marriage — remains a point of controversy.

Although nearly half of Britons believe he should marry Camilla, three out of every four are against her ever becoming queen.

The evening reception at Buckingham Palace will be attended by members of some 400 charitable organisations

linked with the prince during the past 25 years.

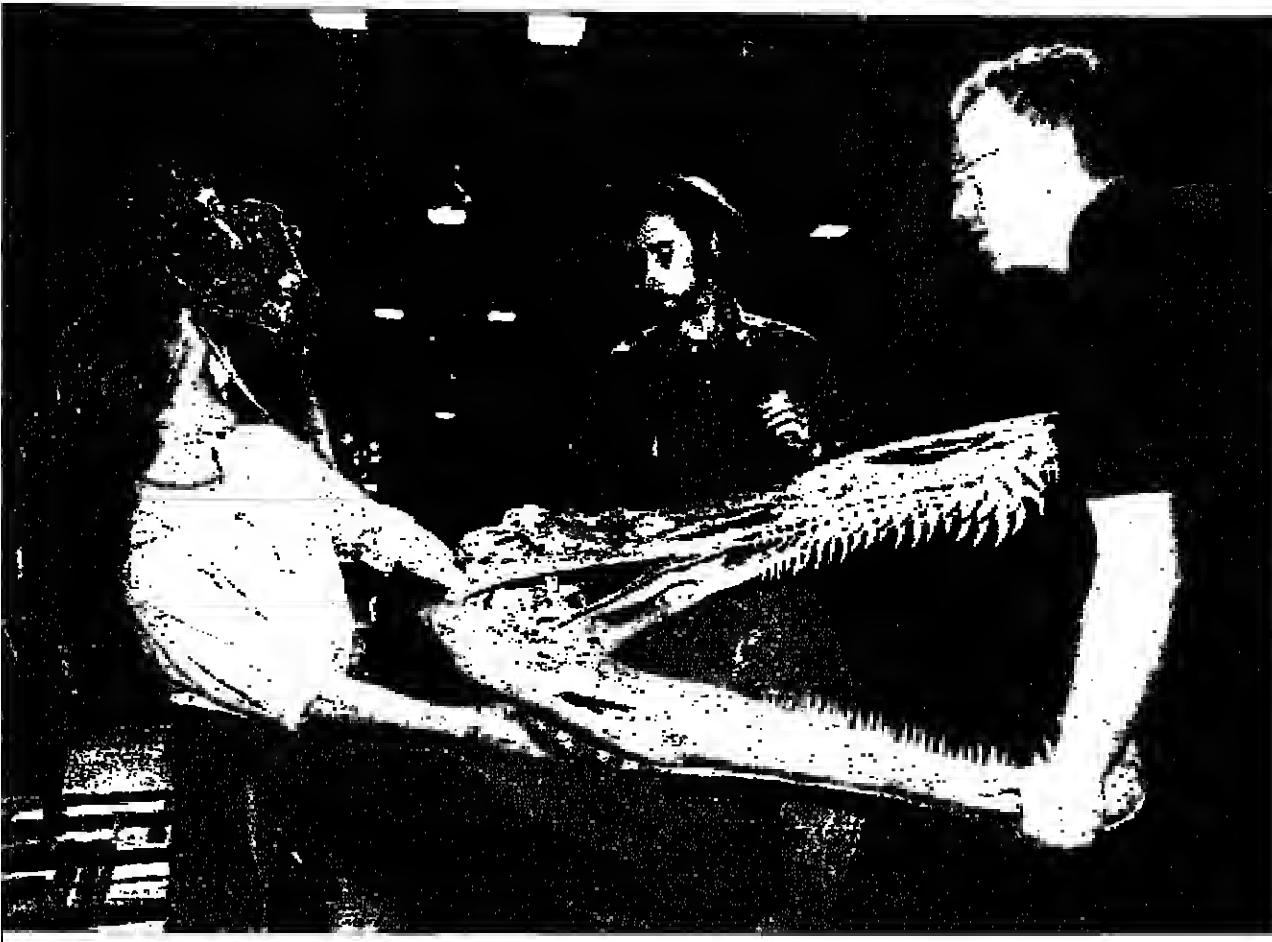
The guests, which also include political figures and celebrities including Joanna Lumley, Dawn French, Ben Elton, Stephen Fry and Spike Milligan, will be entertained by an unknown rock band made up of teenagers.

The four, aged between 16 and 17, were said to have been astounded when the queen responded positively to a request they sent to the royal household to perform for the prince. They will be joined by jugglers, still-walkers, mime artists and conjurers helped into work by

Charles' Prince's Trust enterprise scheme, a tuba quartet, a jazz ensemble, a choir from the Royal College of Music and a youth orchestra.

Saturday, Parker Bowles will host a high-profile party at Highgrove, expected to be attended by Prime Minister Tony Blair's right-hand man Peter Mandelson and a bevy of royalty.

As well as several crowned heads from European countries, including Queen Margrethe of Denmark and King Harald and Queen Sonja of Norway, there will be representation from at least five Arab monarchies.



Student volunteers transport the molded, cast skeleton head of a 36 foot spinosaurus for reassembly at National Geographic magazine's Explorer's Hall. The 100 million year old spinosaurus was discovered in the remote Tenere Desert of the Niger Republic Dec. 4, 1997, by David Varricchio, curator of the Old Trail Museum which is located in Choteau, Montana (Reuters photo)

Russia, Japan, sign declaration pledging quick end to Kuril dispute

MOSCOW (AP) — Russian and Japanese leaders issued a "Moscow Declaration" Friday in which they pledged to seek an end to their 53-year-old dispute over the Kuril islands by the end of next year.

If they succeed, it would mean that Russia and Japan could formally end World War II before the end of the 20th century.

The dispute over ownership of the tiny islands has stopped the two countries from ever signing a formal peace treaty.

The declaration, signed Thursday by Prime Minister Keizo Obuchi of Japan and President Boris Yeltsin of Russia, gives no hint of how the conflict might be resolved, but sets up a new mechanism — and a new resolve — for doing it.

"All of us gained something," said Yeltsin's spokesman, Dmitry Yakushkin.

The declaration was

issued at the outset of talks between Obuchi and Prime Minister Yevgeny Primakov of Russia. The two had been expected to focus on the details of when and how Japan will hand over an \$800 million instalment on a loan it promised last summer.

There was no immediate indication that the loan details had been resolved in their talks.

Thursday, Obuchi and Yeltsin "exchanged views from broad and lofty perspectives," as Obuchi's spokesman put it, in the first formal visit by a Japanese prime minister to the Russian capital in 25 years.

While the subject of the disputed islands loomed over the talks, the leaders were also expected to work out the timing and logistics of Japan's loan, the ITAR-TASS news agency reported.

The money is part of a \$22.6 billion bailout pack-

age arranged by the International Monetary Fund this summer. Both the IMF and the World Bank put their loans on hold after Russia effectively defaulted on foreign loans at the outset of its economic crisis in August.

In addition to agreeing to free up the loan, Obuchi has offered to give Russia \$100 million to promote economic development on the Kuril islands, \$10 million to medical assistance and \$20 million to support youth exchange programmes.

The two prime ministers signed a spate of agreements, including one on guarantees of capital investments that is expected to pave the way for large-scale Japanese investment in Russia, ITAR-TASS said.

The two also agreed on the concept of a Russian-Japanese investment company that would promote direct investments in Russia by Japanese companies.

They signed memorandums on cooperation in tourism, transport, mail and telecommunications, as well as support for Russia's small- and medium-size companies.

Relations between the two countries have long been clouded by the Kuril dispute.

Tokyo claimed title to the islands — Etorofu, Kunashiri, Shikotan and the Habomai islets — in a treaty with Russia in 1875. The Soviet Union took them back in the closing days of World War II, a move Japan has protested ever since as illegal.

The islands have only about 17,000 poor and destitute Russian residents, many of whom would welcome Japanese administration.

The Kurils are important to both countries for symbolic reasons and because they are surrounded by prime fishing waters.

Prince Ranariddh, Hun Sen seal deal

PHNOM PENH (AFP) — Cambodian opposition leader Prince Norodom Ranariddh agreed Friday to join a coalition with bitter rival Hun Sen, ending the prolonged political deadlock following July's disputed elections.

The deal involves changing the constitution to create a royal-appointed senate to balance Hun Sen's parliamentary power, and with FUNCINPEC party leader Prince Ranariddh taking the post of chairman of the national assembly.

Hun Sen becomes prime minister, while the current assembly chairman and president of Hun Sen's Cambodian People's Party (CPP), Chea Sim, becomes president of the new senate, and acting head of state in the absence of King Norodom Sihanouk.

"The main political crisis in the country has been solved and the stalemate in state politics has finished," said a statement from king, who called the snap summit Thursday in a fresh bid to hammer out a deal.

The ailing king is scheduled to leave Saturday for Beijing for at least two months of medical treatment.

"The Cambodian People's Party and FUNCINPEC, who have been given success from the voters, have decided to compromise so that the national assembly start its normal functions in the very near future and a new royal government is formed in the very near future," the declaration said.

"I strongly believe the future of Cambodia is bright and we can now lead our country to development and prosperity," the statement from the King added, adding the first parliamentary session was planned for Nov. 25.

The agreement by the prince to enter a coalition followed the decision by Hun Sen to amnesty five military officials loyal to the prince, including FUNCINPEC military chief Nhiek Bhun Chay.

The CPP won the July 26 general elections, but did

not secure enough seats to rule alone and needed a deal with FUNCINPEC to govern.

He also needs a coalition representative of the election result to secure international recognition, including the currently-vacant United Nations seat and membership of the Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN).

Since the polls, several rounds of discussions have ended in deadlock, while Prince Ranariddh and his ally Sam Rainsy have kept out of the country since their swearing in as MPs on Sept. 24, a day marred by a grenade attack on Hun Sen.

Hun Sen and Prince Ranariddh served as co-premiers after U.N.-sponsored polls in 1993, but Hun Sen ousted his senior partner amid heavy fighting in July last year, only permitting him to return in April.

The prince's return Thursday only came after extensive assurances of safety from Hun Sen, and the offer of palace protection and accommodation

from his father King Sihanouk. CPP officials say much of Thursday's session — held under the auspices of the king — revolved around trust building.

A palace statement described the new senate as "the second highest dignity" in Cambodia, with the power to "examine law adopted by the national assembly and send items back to the national assembly to examine again in case of opposition."

It said for the first session, its members will be appointed by King Sihanouk.

Further moves in power sharing between FUNCINPEC and the CPP include an agreement to divide up Cambodia's nine parliamentary committees, which include working groups on defence, foreign relations, finance, health and human rights.

In the deal the CPP take four, FUNCINPEC take four and the Sam Rainsy Party take one. The allocation of ministerial portfolios have yet to be discussed.

Blair wants EU defence agreement by April

EDINBURGH (R) — British Prime Minister Tony Blair called Friday for "conclusions" in time for a NATO summit next April on ways to give the European Union genuine military power.

In a speech to NATO parliamentarians, Blair went one step further in his reversal of Britain's long-standing opposition to an EU role in defence, setting an ambitious timetable for new arrangements without spelling out detailed proposals.

Leaders of the 15-nation Union must be able to take strategic decisions on Europe-only military operations where the United States chose not to get involved, he said.

"Europe needs genuine military operational capability — not least forces able to react quickly and work together effectively — and genuine political will. Without these we will always be talking about an empty shell," Blair said.

He stressed there was no question of duplicating the North Atlantic Alliance, creating a standing European army or moving away from decision-making by consensus among EU governments.

But European allies who have searched in vain for more specifics since Blair first floated the idea before an informal EU summit in Austria last month were no

wiser after Friday's speech to the North Atlantic Assembly.

Indeed, the prime minister devoted more time in his speech to attacking the Scottish National Party's call for a negotiated withdrawal of Scotland from NATO than he did to spelling out his own idea of Europe's defence role.

"We have no preconceptions. Rather we want a new debate," he said.

However, Blair did suggest an early deadline for progress, saying he hoped to see some emerging conclusions by NATO's 50th anniversary summit in Washington next April, which will adopt a new strategic concept for the alliance.

NATO Secretary-General Javier Solana noted that NATO had been working to build a European Security and Defence Identity since 1996. A new force to be deployed in Macedonia to protect and rescue international monitors in Kosovo if necessary was a first example of such a European-led operation within NATO.

"The ideas and the suggestions of Prime Minister Blair will be very welcome," Solana told Reuters.

But some delegates were frustrated at the absence of specifics and suggested the British initiative might be more style than substance. "Do you know what the

British are actually proposing? We don't," a French delegate said.

In his speech to the assembly, Solana said it was time for Europe to translate its military potential into political reality within the alliance.

"Today, Europe lacks a joint strategic perspective and the courage to take the lead in operations," he said. "It would also have to make available the resources to enable it to fulfil these new tasks."

"By making NATO's military structures more flexible to permit future military coalitions led by the Europeans, we can gradually give Europe more responsibility while keeping our North American allies involved," Solana added.

NATO's Supreme Allied Commander in Europe, U.S. General Wesley Clark, said the sharp reduction in allied defence budgets since the end of the cold war was now threatening the allies' ability to deploy ground forces in a timely manner for peace-support operations.

"The peace dividend has been taken. Military expenditures are at a historic low point... As commander of Allied Command Europe, I have to ask you to help me bring this to a halt," Clark told the parliamentarians.

Striking workers shut museum for 4th day

PARIS (AP) — The Orsay Museum of 19th century art remained closed Friday for the fourth straight day, and personnel voted to extend the strike for better working conditions, museum officials said.

Museum employees are demanding a bonus of 1,600 francs (\$290) for "inconveniences" at the museum which houses France's largest collection of Impressionist masterpieces.

Felix Guyon-Firmin, a spokesman for the so-called Intersyndicale, grouping museum labour unions, linked deteriorating working conditions to the huge crowds drawn to the "Millet-Van Gogh" blockbuster exhibition.

"People are currently waiting in line up to three hours before getting in, and the line is inside the museum itself, blocking access to the main collections," he said in a telephone interview.

Guyon-Firmin said employees are taking the brunt of bad behaviour from impatient crowds, and museum officials have refused to take steps to improve security for both employees and visitors.

"The show has outgrown the space. With 500 people there at a time, it's like a country fair," Guyon-Firmin said.

"Conditions for enjoying the paintings are disastrous." The show, which opened in September to wide critical acclaim, presents dozens of Van Gogh paintings side-by-side with the works by Jean-Francois Millet which inspired them. It runs through Jan. 3.

Guyon-Firmin said a similar human traffic jam was caused by the tremendous success of a show of urban scenes by Monet and Manet.

The Orsay Museum, a renovated train station overlooking the Seine, is one of the city's most popular tourist attractions, drawing some 3 million visitors annually.

The strike is the latest in a wave of social protests which have shut the doors of prime attractions this fall.

The Eiffel Tower was closed for a week earlier this month because of striking employees demanding a larger staff.

Workers at the National Library manned picket lines, keeping scholars out for more than three weeks to protest computer glitches in the automated delivery of books. They went back to work last week.

U.S. congressman opposed to linking aid to nuclear inspections in N. Korea

SEOUL (AFP) — An influential U.S. congressman Friday warned against overreacting to suspected underground nuclear sites in North Korea, as a senior U.S. official arrived here ahead of a three-day visit to the Stalinist state.

House Representative Tony Hall, describing signs of intense famine in the North, advised against linking food aid to the starving country with inspections of its suspected underground nuclear facilities.

"In my personal opinion, I don't think you can connect humanitarian aid to whether we can have site visits," he told journalists, referring to U.S. demands to inspect the underground sites.

"Because if you do that, the agreed framework, the four-party talks and everything, it's over."

"I believe you have to continue to have talks, you have to continue to have dialogue," the Ohio Democrat told reporters here on his return from a four-day private visit to the isolated country.

Hall, who was visiting the North for the fourth

time, said there were "a lot of people" in North Korea, South Korea and the United States who wanted to take dramatic steps by stopping cooperation.

"You stop everything, you are going to provoke confrontation and you are going to see a lot of people die," he said, adding that in the case of confrontation, children, women and the elderly would suffer first.

Hall was responding to a question on whether food and other humanitarian aid to the North should be linked to Pyongyang agreeing to outside inspections of suspect underground facilities.

The Geneva agreement of 1994 called for a freeze of North Korea's nuclear programme in exchange for improved U.S. relations with Pyongyang and the construction of two light-water reactors to be placed under international supervision.

But some U.S. officials suspect the underground facilities, which were spotted by a U.S. satellite in August near the Yongbyon site of North Korea's declared nuclear plant, were intended to circum-

vent the agreement. The United States will move to scrap the Geneva agreement unless the suspicious underground complex is opened to inspections, a senior U.S. official who asked not to be identified warned Tuesday.

If the nuclear agreement collapses, so too will a series of initiatives Washington had launched to bring North Korea out of its isolation, he said.

These include the four-party Korean peace talks with China and South Korea, negotiations on lifting the U.S. economic embargo on North Korea and efforts to provide food aid to the reclusive nation.

The North's ruling Workers' Party newspaper, Rodong Simun, Friday warned of "irretrievable consequences" should Washington "persist in inspecting our underground facility," which Pyongyang says is only for civilian purposes.

Hall made the statement hours before Deputy Assistant Secretary of State Charles Kartman arrived here for talks with South Korean officials to coordinate policy toward the

North. Kartman will lead a high-powered delegation of officials from the State Department, the National Security Council and the Pentagon for three days of talks in Pyongyang beginning Monday.

Hall said his latest visit to the hungry North had taken him to the northern provinces of Yanggang and Jagang and to the south of Pyongyang, and that he saw "a lot of new graves" and "few old people."

According to a recent survey by international aid workers, 95 per cent of drinking water in the North is contaminated and 65-67 per cent of children are stunted because of malnourishment, he said.

Hall brought back with him materials North Koreans use to make "ersatz" or "substitute food." The materials were leaves, twigs and corn stocks used to make brown-coloured dry noodles.

He also displayed pictures of emaciated children in kindergartens and hospitals, who he said were among the best fed in North Korea.

Conservative leader's aunt scoops British lottery

LONDON (R) — Something has finally gone right for Conservative party leader William Hague: his aunt has scooped the jackpot in Britain's national lottery.

The organisers of the game said Friday that Marjorie

Longdin, 73, from near Doncaster in south Yorkshire was one of four people who each won £856,648 (\$1.43 million) in Wednesday's draw.

Hague, struggling to revive the Conservatives' political fortunes, said he was

delighted for his aunt but did not expect her to help bail out the debt-ridden party with her new found wealth.

"We don't expect to see any of the money from Auntie Marjorie, but I think I'll ask her to fill in my lot-

tery forms in the future," he told reporters.

Hague said although luck runs in his family he admitted it has not run much in his direction.

"The most I've ever won on the lottery is 10 quid (pounds)," he said.

1250

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Immediate action required

HIS ROYAL Highness Crown Prince Hassan, the Regent, expressed the concerns and anxieties of the entire country when he said during a meeting with the press corps on Thursday that the danger of another war breaking out over Iraq is quite real. The stakes for the Kingdom as well as for the rest of the region are too high should Washington and London take military actions against Baghdad, the Crown Prince pointed out. We would have to deal not only with the interruption of our oil supplies from Iraq but also with the military and humanitarian implications of any such armed conflict.

Among the dangers looming in the horizon could be the influx of another wave of refugees from Iraq into the country on a scale that Jordan cannot accommodate. The country has barely recovered from the earlier flow of refugees in the wake of the 1991 military strikes against Iraq. The possibility of an exchange of missiles is not beyond the realm of imagination and should also be taken seriously. All parties to the standoff should therefore think in terms of the repercussions of their policies and acts before the escalation reaches the point of no return.

While sounding the alarm over what could happen should a war involving Iraq break out again, the Regent noted the absence of effective international diplomatic efforts to defuse the situation. What is worse, neither the Arab nor the Muslim worlds are taking any meaningful initiatives to de-escalate the tension. It seems that all the international, regional and Arab players are allowing events to take their course. This state of affairs may suggest that the international community is accepting another conflagration in the area at a time when there are viable opportunities for a peaceful end to the current crisis.

If we reduce the brewing conflict to its basic elements, Washington and London want Iraq to cooperate unconditionally with UNSCOM. The Iraqi authorities appear ready to resume cooperation with UNSCOM provided there is light at the end of the tunnel of the sanctions regime on their country. Iraq could be invited to accept unimpeded and full cooperation with UNSCOM for another six months or so at the end of which the sanctions imposed on the country would be lifted, at least on a gradual basis. This way, neither side would be surrendering to the other. Besides, such a formula would be fair to all sides. As long as the U.N. Security Council is interested only in the restoration of cooperation with UNSCOM and the elimination of all Iraqi weapons of mass destruction, putting a certain framework on this cooperation and mission would appear equitable. If certain powers have additional designs, then there is no hope for ever ending the standoff. Under such a situation, it is not only Iraq and its people which will pay the price but all of us in the region as well. That is why we need to put into motion an Arab plan of action to remove the threat of war from the area before it is too late, especially at a time when the outside world is poised to let events take their course.

ARABIC PRESS COMMENTARIES

HRH Prince Faisal commented in a column published in Al Dustour on the role of His Majesty King Hussein in developing sport in the Kingdom. Prince Faisal said that the King's example has been the incentive for the rapid progress in motor sports in Jordan, and Jordanian racing drivers have been able to take the lead because the King has led them from one victory to another. Racing drivers can overcome all obstacles, because they realise that there is nothing impossible when young, said the Prince. The King has personally participated in all youth activities in order to promote them, said Prince Faisal, but what has been achieved in the motor sports in Jordan is a considerable achievement. Our young have people proved that they are able to live up to the King's trust, and they have also proved that they are the best representatives for the Kingdom, doing their utmost to be triumphant and be the best, not just for themselves, but for the country, said Prince Faisal. Jordanians today are preparing themselves to express their happiness on the occasion of the King's birthday, and offer him their prayers to God to keep him safe and sound, added Prince Faisal.

Jordanian Perspective

Hopes for peace rest with Labour

Dr. Musa Kellani

WHEN EHUD Barak visited Jordan a few days ago, he realised how much hope Jordanians pin on Labour victory in the then - imminent municipal as well as the future Knesset elections in Israel. The outcome of last week's local elections in Israel is worth consideration against the backdrop of the conviction that Arab interests stand only to be further battered and twisted out of shape under the present right-wing government of Benjamin Netanyahu.

The opposition Labour party now controls most of the major cities, with occupied Jerusalem being one of the exceptions. But then, the result of the polls in occupied Jerusalem was only expected, given that the predominantly orthodox and orthodox-influenced Israeli residents see the Likud as their saviour against Israeli fears that the Labour might make compromises over the status of the Holy City if it gains power at the centre. It is indeed debatable whether Labour would do that, but as far as the Jerusalem constituents are concerned, Likud is their safest bet.

Now, that does not seem to apply to most other towns, where the focus has obviously been more on local services than national politics. As such, the Likud headline in the peace process and relative moderation of the Labour did not fit into the picture, and therefore the good showing that Labour put up in these places cannot be seen as national trends either.

Indeed, that is the argument Netanyahu is using to comfort his party while Barak argues that the trends in the local polls would be reflected in the next general elections.

For us in Jordan and in the Arab World at large, Labour is indeed the lesser of the two evils. Despite its track record of launching the massive settlement movement in the occupied territories and pursuing a hardline stance against Palestinian nationalism, Labour proved it can talk business with the Arabs in relative moderation. The Oslo agreement and the 1994 Jordanian-Israeli peace treaty have proved that.

Those who were closely involved in the Oslo negotiat-

ing process have revealed that the then - Israeli prime minister, Yitzhak Rabin, and his foreign minister, Shimon Peres — both Labour leaders — were actually willing to give much more than what was actually included in the agreement. It was the Palestinian side which proved to be weak negotiators in terms of spotting and taking advantage of the other party's lean side.

Those revelations, coupled with the realities of the implementation of the Oslo agreement until Labour was ousted in the 1996 elections plus the party's acceptance of the understanding that the Golan Heights would be returned to Syria in return for peace, clearly show that the Arab side can do business with Labour.

That is the essence of the changes that the Arab World would like to see on the Israeli political scene today while marking time against the manoeuvring and stalling tactics adopted by Netanyahu. It has been widely accepted in Arab circles as well as among European and American officials that it is impossible to expect positive progress in the peace process as long as Netanyahu remains at the helm in Israel. And the hopes of those Arabs who believe in the Oslo agreement are pinned on the Labour Party assuming power in Israel in the next elections.

That hopes continue to remain strong despite flaws, which include the reality that it is highly possible that the Israeli-Palestinian peace process could have set in place by then certain physical realities which could never be reversed. And there will be little chance of reopening the file of the peace process and allow the two parties to renegotiate under more favourable terms to the Palestinians.

Furthermore, there will be little land on the West Bank to renegotiate either.

The remote possibility of the Palestinians getting a better deal — or the so-called real light at the end of the tunnel — can be realised only if political turmoil in Israel not only forcing Netanyahu's hands into calling early elections but also bringing about a dramatic Labour sweep of the polls.

But does the strong showing put up by Labour in the

local polls indicate that the party would emerge as the victor in the elections? One thing is clear: As things stand today, Netanyahu has indeed slipped in popularity among the voters as a result of his immature leadership, short-sighted political decisions, the general economic decline and some of the unsavoury details concerning his life in power. As such, the general feeling is that Netanyahu might lose in the next direct elections to premiership. However, that does not mean that the Likud would be edged out of power. It is a strong possibility that Netanyahu might not remain the party's favourite to run for premiership and could be replaced by Yitzhak Mordechai, a career military man like the late Rabin, or Ariel Sharon, who appears to be fast adopting to the diplomatic norms and flexibility that are required for a prime ministerial candidate.

The quibbling in the Labour camp appears to be dormant now, after Barak took the reins from Shimon Peres. But it needs close watch to see whether his disappointed rivals, mainly Yossi Beilin, would undermine or strengthen the party's standing in the next two years.

Barak has argued that the result of last week's local elections as a Labour achievement in that "some of the major towns received a worthy leadership." Seen from that vantage point, the implication is that Labourites controlling major Israeli towns means an opportunity for the party to consolidate and expand its base through positively influencing voters through the city hall.

But it is not the first time that the Labour has been in control of civic affairs in Israeli towns. What we do not know yet at this point in time is whether the so-called new blood in the party is capable of properly utilising the potential power at its disposal and turning it into political assets. Many Jordanians believe that had Rabin survived his assassin's bullets, the Wye agreements would not have been required, since a final draft of an Israeli-Palestinian peace treaty should have been ready along with a comprehensive Syrian-Israeli peace treaty.

Pearls of wisdom

TOO MANY cooks, according to the old adage, spoil the soup. This little saying is just one of the many, often contradictory, clichés that are imparted to people in the course of their lives. For example, consider this pearl of wisdom: two heads are better than one. Woe unto the person that attempts to forge a meaningful plan of action from these two proverbs.

As it happens, however, there are many unfortunate souls out there who nonetheless try to utilise such maxims and modes of thinking as bases for running their lives, businesses or other operations. Such tactics, as has been proven repeatedly, in history, inevitably lead to frustration, inefficiency, insanity and the loss of life. Therefore, as a service to the public, I have decided to list several proverbs that I feel are most pertinent to Jordanian society in an attempt to debunk them and, as a result, help everyone lead happier and more satisfying lives.

— "Early to bed, early to rise makes a man healthy, wealthy and wise." Believe it or not, I actually tried this one for some time. I followed Ben Franklin's advice religiously, letting nothing, including personal relationships and other seemingly important matters, stand in my way. Sadly, my schedule of going to bed early in the morning and rising early in the afternoon has done nothing to alleviate my sorry financial state or low mental power.

— "The early bird gets the worm." May or may not be related to proverb above. It seems that the pundits of old were all fixated on the "early" concept. So, armed with this piece of wisdom, I have been trying to get things done in a prompt manner, showing up early for work, etc. Unfortunately, this saying seems to fall apart when everyone else acts as if you have all day!

— "Liberty, fraternité, égalité." This saying from the French revolution translates to "liberty, brotherhood, equality." It seems that it was intended to foster solidarity and a sense of nationalist pride. Luckily, I won't have to work too hard at debunking this one, because no one seems to have paid it much attention.

— "A penny saved is a penny earned." This is another Ben Franklin special. When I was living in the U.S., this advice was easy to follow: in addition to the fact that American currency includes the penny (Jordan's, alas, does not), I simply didn't buy many clothes, purchased mainly used records, and stuck to budget beer. Now that I am living in Jordan, it is even easier to stick to this maxim, because it is difficult to spend something you don't have.

— "Do unto others as you would have them do unto you." From the Bible. The saying is concerned mainly with treating people decently, i.e., acting in a manner that one would hope to enjoy if the tables were

turned. Since tables don't turn very often, this piece of advice remains limited to the theoretical realm.

Finally, I would like to return to the proverb at the beginning of this column, "Too many cooks spoil the soup." Concerns having too many people in responsible positions. A cook comes in, adds some salt, another happens by, adds some more, until finally dinner has been turned into a mess that no one can stand. That saying again is, too many cooks spoil the soup.

Proverbs can be a good little tool for learning and dealing with events that life hands us. Be careful, though, because you never know when someone will one-up you in the wisdom category.

RECOMMENDED READING: A Scanner Darkly, by Philip K. Dick. A Scanner Darkly centres around a vice police officer/funkie who is both the novel's protagonist and antagonist. The main character, in his role as a police officer, spies on himself and his fellow drug abusers, gradually losing touch with his personality and finally his mind. Dick had extensive first-hand knowledge of the situations described in A Scanner Darkly, later dying of drug-related problems. A must for paranoia/conspiracy theorists.

LETTERS

HAPPY BIRTHDAY

To the editor:

It gives me great pride and happiness on behalf of my fellow Jordanian students at Purdue University in Indiana, to wish His Majesty King Hussein a Happy Birthday.

We, the sons and daughters of our beloved Jordan, have built and helped develop our country into what it is today. We have been able to reach out across the world and spread the jewels of our nation, our culture and our society into the hearts of many people. We have seen our country evolve into the great nation that it is today. Be it economically, politically or socially, with no doubt, the Jordanian people have proved the existence of the beauty behind our history and heritage. All this and more has been achieved under the leadership and guidance of His Majesty King Hussein.

On such an occasion, not only do we wish His Majesty the best, we sincerely thank him for all he

has achieved and led us to achieve throughout all those years. Your Majesty, allow us to send you our deepest and most sincere wishes on your Birthday. We pray to God for your healthy recovery and quick return in your home, your family and your people.

Elias S. Kassar
 Vice President
 The Organisation of
 Arab Students
 Purdue University
 Indiana
 US

To the editor:

Asalaamuwaalaikum. I write to His Majesty King Hussein, sending my warmest wishes for his quick and speedy recovery. We, here in the U.S. are cognisant of His Majesty's unshakably direct, honest, and passionate role in effecting compromise and peace in the Middle East. May Allah's blessings be with you and your family, and may Jordan continue to serve as an exemplar to

others in the Middle East.

Umer Ahmad
 US

To the editor:

I want to join all Jordanians in wishing our King all the best on his Birthday. Saydi - wa mawlay elmo'atham... There are no words that could describe the loving feelings our hearts are filled with to you. You are the King, the father, the brother, and the fellow countryman — to all of us, young and old, I pray for the Lord to give you the health and strength to overcome all odds and obstacles like you have always done. All other nations should be lucky to have such leadership, but no other country could be as proud. Growing up in Amman, I remember the song that translates: "had I not been one of your loyal nation ya Hussein... I would have wished to be... and had Amman not been my heart and my eyes... I would have wished it to be." These words say it all.

Ehab MaAllah
 The University of
 Kansas
 US

To the editor:

On your birthday, Your Majesty, I wish you all the best, and hope you will be with your loyal Jordanian family in the near future enjoying the best of health.

Mones MaAllah
 California
 US

To the editor:

We would like to send our best wishes to His Majesty King Hussein on his birthday. We pray to God to return him well back to our country and the people who love him most.

HAPPY BIRTHDAY!
 Ahmad Al Omari &
 family
 North Carolina
 US

Jordan in a regional context

Reviewed by
 Mohammad Ben Hassein

Columnists last week commented on HRH Crown Prince Hassan, the Regent's meeting with journalists, Jordan's relations with the Arab countries, the Al Ejah Al Mukes programme, the peace process and investment in Jordan.

Al Dustour's editorial commented on HRH Crown Prince Hassan, the Regent, meeting with journalists and described it as an implementation of the principle of dialogue.

During the meeting the Prince discussed different issues concerning Jordan both locally and regionally, said the paper. The Prince highlighted the importance of the media in this crucial time and its role in establishing the national dialogue based on objectivity and accuracy. The role of the national media is to reflect the truth and offer accurate analysis, which will lead to the birth of a free and responsible media in a society where all sectors participate, said the Arabic daily. The Prince also called on journalists to respect the responsibility of freedom given to them, because the worst kind of freedom is without responsibility, added Al Dustour. It is a national duty for the media to respect truth as well as to investigate it, especially on issues concerning Jordan, said Al Dustour.

Al Ra'i's Tareq Massarwah commented on Jordan's relations with the Arab countries saying that former governments have dealt with Arab issues in an off-hand manner, as if they felt regret over Jordan's stand concerning Iraq and the peace treaty with Israel. Massarwah said Jordan took a stand, which it believed in, for the best of Iraq and Kuwait. And yet Jordan's former governments tolerated humiliation and insults from other Arab countries for no reason, said Massarwah. Ironically, newspapers on their front pages, reported that our embassy in Kuwait will be opened soon, after the embassy has been closed for eight years, while the Kuwaiti embassy has been open all through this period, said the writer. Jordanian embassies in the Arab countries have suffered from assaults against them — they have been burnt, robbed, diplomats have been assassinated and kidnapped — more than any other embassies in the world, said Massarwah. Jordan's bankers with Arab countries have been closed, our products have been banned from entering some Arab countries, yet their goods are filling our markets, said Massarwah.

Al Dustour's Jihad Mommani commented on Al Ejah Al Mukes (The Other Direction) programme broadcast from the Doha-

based Al Jazeera television satellite channel which attacked Jordan's regime. Mommani was against the government's decision to close down the station's offices in Amman, saying that the person who directed the insults at Jordan was one person in one programme, so it is not fair to punish the whole channel. Qatar did not give a green light for anybody to attack Jordan and didn't invite the guests in order to lash out at Jordan, said Mommani. He said Qatar did not

allow a station to be based in Doha, which is a non-broadcast station. He said that the station's broadcast from Doha was a violation of the territory. The writer also criticised the attacks against Israel targets which he considered a challenge to the Wye accords. Ramiyeh charged that Israel took advantage of the attacks by launching propaganda against the Palestinians while at the same time expanding settlements in the occupied territories. The Palestinian National Authority has failed to expose to the world Israeli violations of the accords, said Ramiyeh. The writer expressed his concern about the negative consequences of the attacks and the expansion of the settlements in the Arab lands.

Al Ra'i's Fahed Fakel commented on investment in Jordan which he said, suffers from a bad investment environment caused by bureaucracy and the stifling routine. However, said Fakel, there are some encouraging signs that make Jordan suitable for foreign as well as local ventures: the labour force is cheap and well qualified; Jordan is undergoing an economic reform programme funded by the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund and donor countries; the European and Arab markets are open for Jordan products. Furthermore, he continued, the industrial zone in Irbid qualifies for tax-exemption in the American market; the companies law is the latest; the stock market is organised; foreign debts are shrinking and under control; the preservation of the currency is reliable; and budget deficit is going down; and the location of the country is of strategic importance. Finally Jordan is at peace with Israel and has good relations with the Arab countries, added Fakel.

Week in Print

features

is reprinted from the Wisconsin of willmer, Minnesota

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By Marian Baran, Spokane, Wash
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This week he's the King's skier

His Majesty's birthday celebrated with a splash

This article is reprinted from the West Central Tribune of Willmar, Minnesota

WHAT DO you get a king for his birthday? For Chad Thompson of rural New London, the answer is easy.

This week Thompson will personally deliver a couple of "helicopters," slalom skiers, foot flips and maybe even a Little Crow Ski Club T-shirt to help King Hussein have a happy day.

Thompson, 25, travelled with 12 other professional American water skiers to Jordan on Wednesday to perform for the King, who apparently has a penchant for water stunts. This is the fourth time King Hussein has been entertained by a ski show for his birthday. It's the first time Thompson has been included in the birthday entourage.

"I guess he likes to have ski shows for his birthday," said Thompson, who left New London early Monday morning for the 27-hour trip to Jordan. They'll spend nearly a week in Jordan but perform just once for the King.

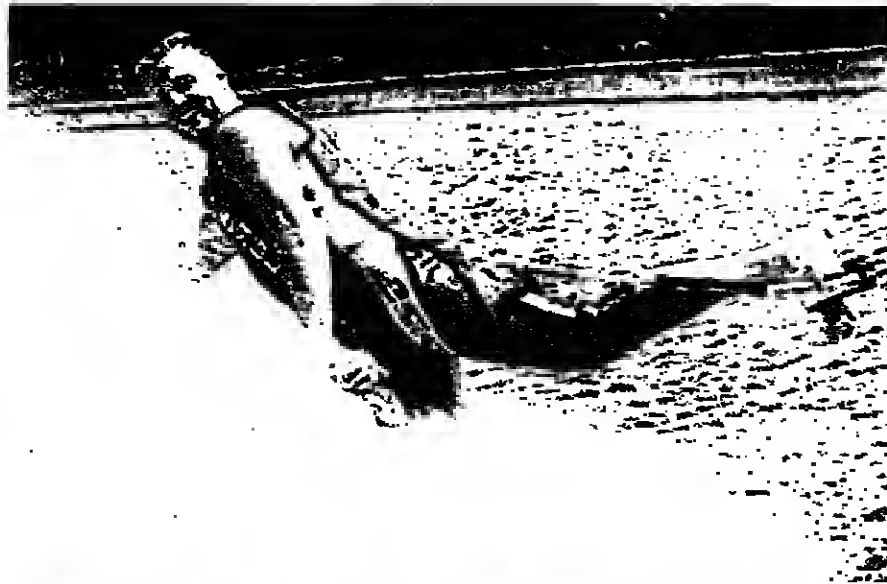
A skier in Florida, Don Buffa, who puts together the King's birthday ski shows, called Thompson at his Thompson's Norway Lake home last Thursday and asked if he'd like an all-expense paid trip to the Mideast.

Thompson, who has skied at Florida's Sea World for three years and will spend this winter skiing for Cypress Gardens, didn't hesitate to accept the invitation to the King's party.

One reason is that he'd heard glowing reports from other skiers who've performed for the King in the past. "I guess they really treat you like a king when you get there," Thompson quipped.

Limousines, nice hotels, sight-seeing and meals are apparently just some of the party favours King Hussein is noted for showering on skiers in the past. They really take good care of you.

Thompson said the chance to travel overseas and perform before an international audience hosted by majesty was just too good of an opportunity to pass by, even



Water skier Chad Thompson performs a bare-footed, one-footed stunt. Thompson is in Jordan to perform at His Majesty King Hussein's 63rd birthday party celebrations (photo West Central Tribune)

though it meant delaying the first week of work at his new job at Cypress Gardens.

There are a few unknowns about the trip. "I don't know enough about it to be nervous," Thompson said Sunday night as he was loading his skis into his pickup.

Thompson said he didn't know what body of water the exhibition would take place on and he didn't know exactly when the King's birthday was and what day the exhibition would take place.

Thompson also hadn't skied with the others in the group before, which didn't bother him much. He said because the skiers in the group are professionals who can "fill any role" in a show, the one practice they'll be allowed to have in Jordan should be enough preparation for the King's exhibition.

The skiers will likely do some of their more impressive stunts, like barefoot skiing and jumping. Thompson said he's not sure if performing for a king will make him more nervous than performing for the thousands who watch him and the Little Crow Ski Team every weekend at Neer Park in New London.

Thompson said he's confident the group will put on a good show for the King, but even if there are a few mistakes, he hopes the honoured guest won't be too discriminating. "I don't think he'll be too critical," said Thompson. "But I'd rather leave Jordan saying I didn't fall before the King."

Thompson, the son of Joanne and Wayne Thompson, learned to water ski when he was five and joined the popular Little Crow Ski Club in 1986. Thompson served as show director for the national champion ski team in 1996, '97 and '98.

His parents are both excited and a bit apprehensive about their son's trip. "It makes me a little nervous with him going to that part of the world, but he'll be OK," said Wayne Thompson, who is the Kandiyohi County coordinator. "It's a once-in-a-lifetime experience."

Regional

Arm wrestlers in Egypt throttle stereotypes

By Christine Hauser
Reuters

THE EGYPTIAN and the Israeli glared across the table, chins jutting defiantly and legs splayed to brace themselves for the starter's signal.

The referee forced the arm wrestlers' clobbered fists, drenched in sweat, into position.

Suddenly the Egyptian jerked his hand aside in protest, wheeled away and paced the floor before returning to the table.

The mood at the Cairo stadium intensified. Rowdy army cadets and spectators whistled and clapped from the grandstands.

The two wrestlers bent their heads to bear the referee. Then they edged up to the table again and the crowd went wild, cheering on the Egyptian. "Go!" they roared.

Forearms bulging and legs trembling, Mahmoud Barakat and Shah Ben Shahr clamped hands again

and grimaced as they strained to stubborn deadlock. Slowly, the Israeli twisted Barakat's wrist to the side and forced it to the table.

Boos and catcalls echoed in the hall as Ben Shahr walked to the judge's panel to record his victory in the 1998 World Arm Sport Federation (WAF) world championship.

"He tried to get an illegal hold on me," offered a dejected Barakat after his defeat. Israeli coach Ben-Zion Bayer said: "They don't like it when we win but we do it anyway."

No one talked politics when the world's top arm wrestlers met at the WAF championships on Nov. 4 to 6.

Israelis got to grips with Arabs. Russians squared off with Americans. And Egypt's women arm wrestlers showed that a fierce will to win lay behind the Islamic veils most of them wore.

"In no world championship has any nation field-

ed so many ladies as Egypt," said WAF Secretary General Barij Barandas.

The Calcutta-based WAF, founded more than 30 years ago by an American, brings together men and women arm wrestlers from more than 70 member countries. And they want respect.

"The mistaken belief is that arm wrestling is a low-life, down-in-the-gutter, bar-room sport," said Frank Bean, a WAF official from Tennessee. "But it's wonderful. One-on-one." The Russians woo the tournament and Georgia was second.

The WAF, pursuing international recognition, has applied to the General Assembly of International Sports Federations and the International Olympic Committee.

Bean said arm wrestling, at least in the United States, yields to football and baseball in the sponsorship stakes.

When arm wrestlers from about 30 countries aligned

elbows on chest-high tables in Cairo, they made sure the playing field was level. "We're one big family," said referee Kareo Bean.

An Armenian coach mumbled and made the sign of the cross as his burly protégé strained to hold off a giant American preacher. Moments after the American slammed his arm to the table, he consoled the Armenian with a gentle handshake.

"I do that all the time," said Bobby Hopkins, a minister from Florida. "My physical being opens their eyes and when I shake hands it is an example to youth to do the right thing."

Egyptian spectators, accustomed to a society that expects women to behave with Islamic decorum, got a taste of Italian exuberance when Parizia de Angeli downed her opponent.

Whooping loudly, she hoisted the Italian flag on a victory lap and hurled herself into the arms of her male coaches, leaping up and wrapping her legs

around them. Rows of Egyptian army cadets burst into cheers as she dashed into the stands to kiss spectators.

Egyptian teenagers leaned over the rails and shrieked for the antedote of Israeli arm wrestler Joe Fink as he pulled to compete, old socks pulled to his elbows to warm his forearms.

"I have no idea what they're saying," shrugged Fink, who earns a living guarding Jewish settlements in Israel.

Israeli coach Bayer showed a reporter a picture of himself in Israel huddled with U.S. Ambassador Edward Walker, their hands clasped in a mock arm wrestling grip.

"He told me he wants to learn because he arm wrestles all the time with Netanyahu and Arafat," said Bayer.

Ben Shahr said he arranges wedding parties where he is out crushing foes with his 45-cm biceps. "I'm a very sweet man," he said, after posing for pictures for Egyptian girls.

Sweetness is not a quality opponents would immediately detect in some of the stars of Egypt's 40-strong women's team.

Not in Hoda Ahmed, a veiled middle-aged mother of two whose steely muscles have earned her the nickname "The Arm-breaker."

Nor in the eyes of Aza Abdul Bedia. "I look my opponent in the face. If I see fear, I think maybe I can win," she said.

Just ask master class wrestler Souheir Exandar about making inroads in a male-dominated sport. "Women go to the moon," she said. "I like difficulty. It makes me believe in myself." Egyptian women's coach Amal Ahmed said her charges spend several hours a day weightlifting and improving their technique.

The team includes a large number of handicapped women.

Flexing their biceps for a reporter to squeeze, they brushed off perceptions of Muslim women as meek and submissive.

One 18-year-old Egyptian woman in particular was the picture of determination as she climbed awkwardly onto the scales to be weighed by a referee before the tournament.

"I'm Yasmin Ahmed," she declared proudly. "Blind." Women in Egypt have broken ground in other sports, such as soccer, often seen in the Arab World as reserved for men. They might grit their teeth when 41-year-old American James Bartles explains why he arm wrestles. "Because I'm a guy," he grins.

Jordan celebrates King's birthday

(Continued from page 1)

For the occasion His Majesty received congratulatory cables from Arab and foreign heads of states on Friday.

The King received cables from Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak, Sultan Qaboos Ben Saeed of Oman, Algerian President Liamio Zeroual, President

Zine Al Abidine Ben Ali of Tunisia, President of the United Arab Emirates Sheikh Zayed Ben Sultan Al Nahayan, Bahraini leader Sheikh Issa Ben Salman Al Khalifeh and Palestinian President Yasser Arafat, Pakistani Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif, German President Roman Herzog, Israeli Prime Minister Beoyamin Netanyahu

as well as UAE and Palestinian senior officials. In their messages, Arab and foreign leaders wished King Hussein continued good health and happiness and praised his supportive stand of Arab causes and his endeavours to establish peace and security in the Middle East region and the world at large.

Regent conveys to King people's wishes

(Continued from page 1)

You have always carried in your mind the image of your grandfather, King Abdullah Ben Al Hussein, the founder of modern Jordan, a king to whom the Arabs pledged allegiance, the king who created a model country in which Arabs take pride. A country that has consolidated the concept of the one Arab family that hails from different origins, always seeking to unite Arab ranks.

ignoring the occasional voices of ingratitude.

Your Majesty, Your birthday will remain, with God's grace, as it has always been for us your loyal citizens who have placed you deep in their hearts. A very precious anniversary which reminds us of your great and continued efforts for the sake of your people. It is an anniversary that rekindles in our hearts new hopes for the future generations, an anniversary which we seize to renew to Your Majesty our gratitude and love and to look forward to Your Majesty's future contributions for your country and nation. We pray to God to bestow upon you continued good health.

Your Majesty, in your birthday your people have made their hearts the abode of your throne, while they yearn to meet you soon. May God bless you.

U.S. says it looks forward to end of Saddam's era

(Continued from page 1)

Under the ceasefire that ended Gulf war in 1991, sanctions cannot be lifted until U.N. weapons inspectors certify that Iraq has been disarmed.

While the Security Council remains divided over the use of force against Iraq, it has unanimously demanded that Baghdad rescind its Oct. 31 decision to cut all cooperation with U.N. weapons inspectors. And it strongly backed an appeal from Annan to Saddam to let the inspectors to return to work immediately.

"At the meeting with members of the council this afternoon they'll exchange views on Iraq, but the secretary general's position remains the same: He has no plans at this time to go to Baghdad," Eckhardt said.

The five permanent members of the Security Council — the U.S., Britain, France, Russia and China — met Friday morning to discuss the crisis.

Diplomats who attended the closed meeting said there was a brief discussion about the possibility of Annan flying to Baghdad — but no proposal or initiative for him to do it because the council doesn't see anything to mediate or negotiate.

"What is missing here is any positive reaction from the Iraqi authorities," Deputy U.S. Ambassador Peter Burleigh, the current council president, said Friday. "The responsibility is theirs to come forward and come back into compliance."

Iraq has also not responded positively to separate appeals from many Security Council members, he said. In his first statement since the start of the dispute, Saddam said Friday that he was not trying to create a crisis and would accept "positively any initiative" that would lift U.N.

sanctions.

Earlier, Burleigh was asked what the council would accept from Iraq to end the crisis.

As a first step, Burleigh said, the council would accept "a public and official rescinding" of the Oct. 31 announcement and an Aug. 5 ban on spot weapons inspections.

"The council has made very clear that it also requires cooperation on the ground to be demonstrated," he said, which would mean the immediate resumption of unfettered inspections.

During the last Iraqi crisis, in February, the secretary general flew to Baghdad and secured an agreement to allow unfettered weapons inspections that averted U.S. and British airstrikes. Iraq, however, has been reneging on its part of the bargain for months.

Burleigh said the secretary general and the council have "bent over backwards" to respond to Iraq's request for a comprehensive review of its compliance with U.N. resolutions.

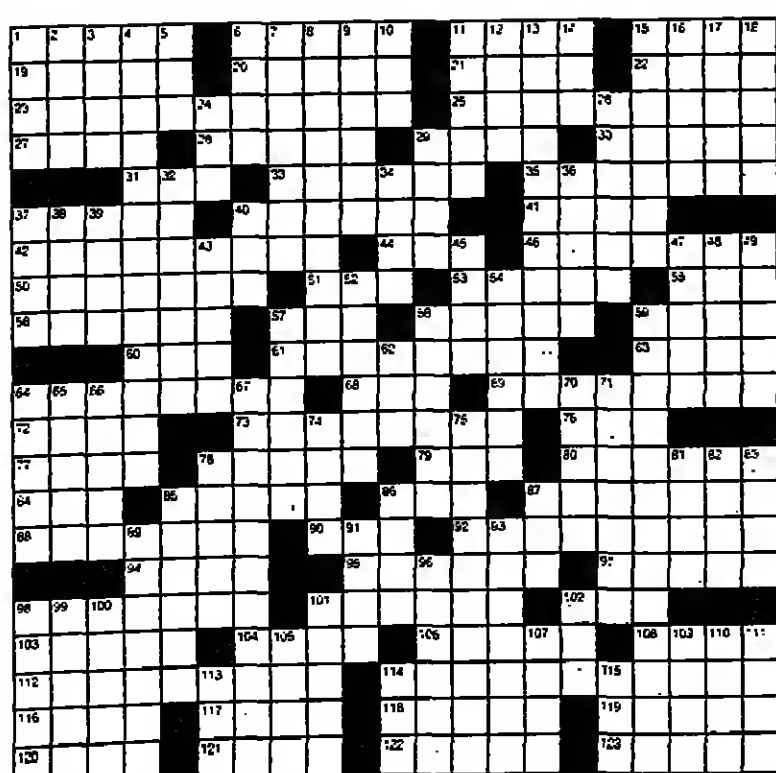
Iraq cut off dealings with the inspectors after a letter from the council to Annan outlining the framework for a review did not include a timetable for lifting sanctions.

The Saturday Crossword

DINING OUT

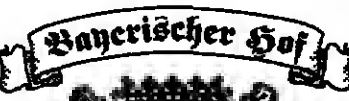
By Marian Baran, Spokane, Washington

- ACROSS
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 2. Ready to swing
 3. Tensory
 4. Peter or Ivan, e.g.
 5. Mythology
 6. "Casablanca" co-star
 7. Actor-Rob
 8. Verdi opera
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 137. Breakfast in Paris?
 138. Beefsteak
 139. Actor-Rob
 140. Verdi opera
 141. Breakfast in Paris?
 142. Beefsteak
 143. Actor-Rob
 144. Verdi opera
 145. Breakfast in Paris?
 146. Beefsteak
 147. Actor-Rob
 148. Verdi opera
 149. Breakfast in Paris?
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 159. Actor-Rob
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 164. Verdi opera
 165. Breakfast in Paris?
 166. Beefsteak
 167. Actor-Rob
 168. Verdi opera
 169. Breakfast in Paris?
 170. Beefsteak
 171. Actor-Rob
 172. Verdi opera
 173. Breakfast in Paris?
 174. Beefsteak
 175. Actor-Rob
 176. Verdi opera
 177. Breakfast in Paris?
 178. Beefsteak
 179. Actor-Rob
 180. Verdi opera
 181. Breakfast in Paris?
 182. Beefsteak
 183. Actor-Rob
 184. Verdi opera
 185. Breakfast in Paris?
 186. Beefsteak
 187. Actor-Rob
 188. Verdi opera
 189. Breakfast in Paris?
 190. Beefsteak
 191. Actor-Rob
 192. Verdi opera
 193. Breakfast in Paris?
 194. Beefsteak
 195. Actor-Rob
 196. Verdi opera
 197. Breakfast in Paris?
 198. Beefsteak
 199. Actor-Rob
 200. Verdi opera



Last Sunday's Crossword Solved

- ACROSS
1. N.M. art colony
 2. Little bit
 3. "Inio" Everest
 4. chronicle
 5. Medieval slave
 6. Pallid
 7. Atlantic fish
 8. Israel's Meir
 9. Character in "The Tempest"
 10. Glossary term
 11. Dream
 12. Lohengrin aria
 13. Shooters' grp.
 14. Aware of
 15. Arabian seaport
 16. On the briny
 17. Turner and
 18. Endure
 19. Language suffix
 20. of roses
 21. "The Thin Man" star
 22. Research facility
 23. N.M. art colony
 24. Little bit
 25. "Inio" Everest
 26. chronicle
 27. Medieval slave
 28. Pallid
 29. Atlantic fish
 30. Israel's Meir
 31. Character in "The Tempest"
 32. Glossary term
 33. Dream
 34. Lohengrin aria
 35. Shooters' grp.
 36. Aware of
 37. Arabian seaport
 38. On the briny
 39. Turner and
 40. Endure
 41. Language suffix
 42. of roses
 43. "The Thin Man" star
 44. Research facility



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Daley declares Lebanon open for U.S. business

BEIRUT (AFP) — Commerce Secretary William Daley declared Lebanon open for U.S. investment Friday on a landmark visit aimed at breathing new life into trade ties scarred by years of sanctions imposed after anti-American attacks.

"After years of civil war that saddened us all, and after American businesses abandoned Lebanon, we can finally say: Lebanon is open for U.S. industry," Daley told a lavish official lunch at a Beirut hotel.

"Lebanon's economic changes and openness to investors and companies to come in and look at the changes that are occurring present a tremendous opportunity for U.S. businesses," he said.

Daley said the Commerce Department planned to set up an office in Beirut, its 75th around the world, hoping that U.S. businesses would satisfy a long-held desire to take part in Lebanon's \$18 billion post-war rebuilding programme.

"The office will help identify opportunities for U.S. firms to get a foothold in the reconstruction of Beirut," he said, noting that the United States was already Lebanon's second-largest trading partner.

"Americans sold more than \$550 million in goods here last year. We bought \$80 million in goods from Lebanon and we will buy more this year," he said.

Daley, the first U.S. commerce secretary to visit Lebanon, also held talks with president-elect Gen-

eral Emile Lahoud and Prime Minister Rafik Hariri and visited Beirut's war-devastated downtown area, which is undergoing major reconstruction.

He surprised Lebanese officials and journalists by walking out of the hotel and heading toward a nearby shop, but still amid a heavily guarded armoured motorcade with machine-gun-toting security agents.

"This is to try to change the idea that the streets of Beirut are dangerous," he told AFP.

Daley urged Lebanese officials to press ahead with economic reforms to meet the demands of U.S. investors in terms of transparency, red tape and the protection of intellectual property rights.

"I welcome the Lebanese parliament's commission action this week in moving copyright legislation forward," he said.

He also oversaw the signing of an accord awarding U.S. communications firm Continental Electronics Corporation a \$7 million contract to rehabilitate Lebanon's official Radio-Liban.

Daley's visit comes a year after the United States lifted restrictions on American travellers to Lebanon, although it continues to warn U.S. nationals the country remains potentially dangerous.

The measures were imposed in 1985 after a spate of hostage-takings of Americans and deadly anti-Western attacks by

Lebanon-based groups during the country's 1975-1990 civil war.

Visiting U.S. congressmen had repeatedly chided President Bill Clinton's administration for maintaining travel sanctions which were detrimental to U.S. businesses eager to take a share of the lucrative contracts from Lebanon's post-war reconstruction.

"Daley's visit is the crowning of years of efforts to normalise economic and trade relations with the United States which have now been put back on track," Lebanese American Business Association President Salim Zeeni told AFP.

"Now we hear from U.S. companies inquiring every day about ways they can take part in infrastructure reconstruction projects in Lebanon and this U.S. competition with other European firms is definitely to the benefit of Lebanon," he said.

Beirut had remained generally off-limits to U.S. visitors, with only sporadic visits by a few officials, including Secretary of State Madeleine Albright and her aides, who made brief, unannounced stops in Beirut under tight security.

"The visit proves that the U.S. has finally decided to put its weight into consolidating trade and economic relations with Lebanon and that shows further confidence in Lebanon," a Western diplomat in Beirut told AFP.

IMF backs \$41b Brazil aid package

WASHINGTON (AFP) — The IMF announced an international financial aid package Friday for Brazil of more than \$41 billion to help shield its economy from global turmoil.

The International Monetary Fund (IMF) will provide \$18 billion and the World Bank and the Inter-American Development Bank together about \$9 billion, IMF Managing Director Michel Camdessus said.

The Group of Ten (G-10) of industrialised countries will provide \$14.5 billion, Camdessus said. Of that, \$37 billion will be available in the next 12 months if needed.

"Brazil's programme first and foremost addresses the chief source of its external vulnerability, namely its chronic public sector deficit, which the country is now tackling in a serious and sustainable manner," he said in a statement.

"The Brazilian authorities are also committed to further opening up the economy, ensuring firm monetary discipline and macroeconomic stability, and maintaining the current exchange rate regime," he added.

Global markets have been waiting two months for the IMF's seal of approval on Brazil, hoping it will stem the flight of capital from the country that in mid-October averaged \$500 million a day after \$1 billion a day in September.

In Brasilia, Finance Minister Pedro Malan said the aid programme would not result in any significant devaluation of the Brazilian currency, the real.

"The current monetary policy ... will be maintained," he said. The real initially was pegged one-to-one to the dollar but it has lost some seven per cent of value in recent years, and now the dollar fetches about 1.19 reals.

Stocks markets in Brazil and the United States moved higher on the news of the aid package and the real climbed against the dollar.

The three-year agreement calls for a gross domestic primary budget surplus of 2.6 per cent in 1999, 2.8 per cent in 2000, and three per cent

in 2001, Camdessus said.

The economic reforms combine a large up-front "fiscal adjustment" of over three per cent of gross domestic product (GDP), with reforms of social security, public administration, public expenditure management, tax policy and revenue sharing, Camdessus said.

The IMF chief said it would "confront head-on the structural weaknesses that lie at the root of the public sector's financial difficulties," in Brazil.

"The way is now open for the international community to provide financial support to Brazil that will enhance market confidence in the government's economic policies and help ensure the success of the country's programme," he said.

Shoring up Brazil's faltering economy is also considered critical in the attempt to contain an acute economic downturn that started in east Asia in 1997 and later spread to Russia.

Late last month the IMF and central bankers worldwide were pleased with the announcement of a tough austerity package that included tax hikes and budget cuts totalling \$23.55 billion.

The plan was designed to close Brazil's gaping budget deficit, which now equals \$60 billion or eight per cent of GDP.

While the package drew praise abroad, Brazilian investors warned that the tax hikes — worth \$11.2 billion — could dampen corporate earnings.

"Completion of the IMF-led loan package for Brazil will provide a needed dose of liquid courage for the international investment community and will likely forestall significant pressure on the real in the short-term," said Bradley Belt, vice president for international economic policy at the Centre for Strategic and International Studies here.

"However, it doesn't address Brazil's underlying fiscal problems. If (President Fernando Henrique) Cardoso is not ultimately successful in implementing key aspects of the austerity plan then the loan package probably isn't big enough," he stressed.

Exchange Rates Thursday, 12-11-98

| CURRENCY | JORDAN DINAR | SAUDI RIAL | U.S. DOLLAR | BAHRAIN DOLLAR | QATAR RIAL | OMAN RIAL | YEMEN RIAL | IRAN RIAL | AFGHAN RIAL | PAKISTAN RUP | INDIA RUP | THAI BATH | SINGAPORE DOLLAR | HONG KONG DOLLAR | NEW ZEALAND DOLLAR | AUSTRALIAN DOLLAR | EURO |
|--------------------|--------------|------------|-------------|----------------|------------|-----------|------------|-----------|-------------|--------------|-----------|-----------|------------------|------------------|--------------------|-------------------|----------|
| JORDAN DINAR | 1.0000 | 0.1867 | 0.1927 | 0.1979 | 0.1830 | 0.1844 | 0.2374 | 0.2067 | 0.2067 | 0.2067 | 0.2067 | 0.2067 | 0.2067 | 0.2067 | 0.2067 | 0.2067 | 0.2067 |
| SAUDI RIAL | 5.2884 | 1.0000 | 0.1927 | 0.1979 | 0.1830 | 0.1844 | 0.2374 | 0.2067 | 0.2067 | 0.2067 | 0.2067 | 0.2067 | 0.2067 | 0.2067 | 0.2067 | 0.2067 | 0.2067 |
| U.S. DOLLAR | 5.1853 | 0.9794 | 1.0000 | 0.9748 | 0.9425 | 1.0068 | 12.1284 | 1.0726 | 1.0726 | 1.0726 | 1.0726 | 1.0726 | 1.0726 | 1.0726 | 1.0726 | 1.0726 | 1.0726 |
| BAHRAIN DOLLAR | 0.8325 | 0.1025 | 0.1026 | 1.0000 | 0.9793 | 0.1035 | 1.2447 | 0.1101 | 0.1101 | 0.1101 | 0.1101 | 0.1101 | 0.1101 | 0.1101 | 0.1101 | 0.1101 | 0.1101 |
| QATAR RIAL | 0.4548 | 0.1026 | 0.1048 | 1.0212 | 1.0000 | 0.1057 | 1.2710 | 0.1124 | 0.1124 | 0.1124 | 0.1124 | 0.1124 | 0.1124 | 0.1124 | 0.1124 | 0.1124 | 0.1124 |
| OMAN RIAL | 5.1434 | 0.9707 | 0.9912 | 0.9586 | 0.9454 | 1.0000 | 12.0221 | 1.0633 | 1.0633 | 1.0633 | 1.0633 | 1.0633 | 1.0633 | 1.0633 | 1.0633 | 1.0633 | 1.0633 |
| YEMEN RIAL | 4.6276 | 0.9807 | 0.9824 | 0.9034 | 0.7868 | 0.9832 | 1.0000 | 0.9832 | 0.9832 | 0.9832 | 0.9832 | 0.9832 | 0.9832 | 0.9832 | 0.9832 | 0.9832 | 0.9832 |
| IRAN RIAL | 4.8370 | 0.9128 | 0.9321 | 0.9033 | 0.8951 | 0.9454 | 11.9886 | 1.0000 | 1.0000 | 1.0000 | 1.0000 | 1.0000 | 1.0000 | 1.0000 | 1.0000 | 1.0000 | 1.0000 |
| AFGHAN RIAL | 21.4531 | 4.0548 | 4.1359 | 40.3427 | 39.5005 | 41.7788 | 50.2146 | 44.7114 | 13.2100 | 13.2100 | 13.2100 | 13.2100 | 13.2100 | 13.2100 | 13.2100 | 13.2100 | 13.2100 |
| PAKISTAN RUP | 1.4124 | 0.2868 | 0.2722 | 2.6524 | 2.5974 | 0.2748 | 3.3014 | 0.2920 | 0.2920 | 0.2920 | 0.2920 | 0.2920 | 0.2920 | 0.2920 | 0.2920 | 0.2920 | 0.2920 |
| INDIA RUP | 0.0509 | 0.1806 | 0.1640 | 1.5978 | 1.5647 | 0.1654 | 1.9888 | 0.1759 | 0.1759 | 0.1759 | 0.1759 | 0.1759 | 0.1759 | 0.1759 | 0.1759 | 0.1759 | 0.1759 |
| THAI BATH | 2.3804 | 0.4493 | 0.4587 | 4.4701 | 4.3774 | 0.4628 | 5.9638 | 0.4621 | 0.4621 | 0.4621 | 0.4621 | 0.4621 | 0.4621 | 0.4621 | 0.4621 | 0.4621 | 0.4621 |
| SINGAPORE DOLLAR | 1.9533 | 0.3703 | 0.3783 | 3.6868 | 3.6104 | 0.3817 | 4.5890 | 0.4058 | 0.4058 | 0.4058 | 0.4058 | 0.4058 | 0.4058 | 0.4058 | 0.4058 | 0.4058 | 0.4058 |
| HONG KONG DOLLAR | 7.9818 | 1.5064 | 1.5381 | 14.9886 | 14.6779 | 0.5918 | 18.6583 | 1.6501 | 1.6501 | 1.6501 | 1.6501 | 1.6501 | 1.6501 | 1.6501 | 1.6501 | 1.6501 | 1.6501 |
| NEW ZEALAND DOLLAR | 1.7415 | 0.3287 | 0.3356 | 3.2704 | 3.2038 | 0.3368 | 4.0707 | 0.3600 | 0.3600 | 0.3600 | 0.3600 | 0.3600 | 0.3600 | 0.3600 | 0.3600 | 0.3600 | 0.3600 |
| AUSTRALIAN DOLLAR | 2.6539 | 0.5805 | 0.5172 | 5.0398 | 4.9353 | 0.5218 | 6.2730 | 0.5548 | 0.5548 | 0.5548 | 0.5548 | 0.5548 | 0.5548 | 0.5548 | 0.5548 | 0.5548 | 0.5548 |
| EURO | 11.3247 | 2.1374 | 2.1823 | 21.2565 | 20.9257 | 2.2018 | 26.4705 | 2.2413 | 2.2413 | 2.2413 | 2.2413 | 2.2413 | 2.2413 | 2.2413 | 2.2413 | 2.2413 | 2.2413 |
| US DOLLAR | 1.0000 | 1.8900 | 0.9834 | 0.7194 | 0.1770 | 0.8110 | 0.5283 | 0.5866 | 0.5866 | 0.5866 | 0.5866 | 0.5866 | 0.5866 | 0.5866 | 0.5866 | 0.5866 | 0.5866 |
| GERMAN MARK | 0.0024 | 1.0000 | 0.3574 | 0.4334 | 0.1066 | 0.4886 | 0.3170 | 0.3618 | 0.3618 | 0.3618 | 0.3618 | 0.3618 | 0.3618 | 0.3618 | 0.3618 | 0.3618 | 0.3618 |
| FRANCE FRANC | 1.3663 | 2.7978 | 1.0000 | 1.2124 | 0.2862 | 1.3888 | 0.8870 | 1.0483 | 1.0483 | 1.0483 | 1.0483 | 1.0483 | 1.0483 | 1.0483 | 1.0483 | 1.0483 | 1.0483 |
| SWITZERLAND FRANC | 0.8930 | 2.0374 | 0.5348 | 1.0000 | 0.2480 | 0.1257 | 0.7215 | 0.8282 | 0.8282 | 0.8282 | 0.8282 | 0.8282 | 0.8282 | 0.8282 | 0.8282 | 0.8282 | 0.8282 |
| ITALY LIRA | 123.3000 | 204.6780 | 73.1620 | 88.7050 | 21.8191 | 1.0000 | 64.8913 | 736.2800 | 143.8714 | 143.8714 | 143.8714 | 143.8714 | 143.8714 | 143.8714 | 143.8714 | 143.8714 | 143.8714 |
| HOLLAND GUILDER | 1.8001 | 3.1542 | 1.1276 | 1.3670 | 0.3382 | 1.5410 | 1.0000 | 1.1382 | 1.1382 | 1.1382 | 1.1382 | 1.1382 | 1.1382 | 1.1382 | 1.1382 | 1.1382 | 1.1382 |
| SWEDEN KRONA | 0.1978 | 13.3057 | 4.7876 | 5.7853 | 1.4189 | 5.5028 | 4.2187 | 48.0716 | 8.3925 | 8.3925 | 8.3925 | 8.3925 | 8.3925 | 8.3925 | 8.3925 | 8.3925 | 8.3925 |
| FINLAND MARKKA | 16.7900 | 27.8871 | 9.8688 | 11.8995 | 2.9515 | 13.5272 | 8.7780 | 1.0000 | 18.4783 | 18.4783 | 18.4783 | 18.4783 | 18.4783 | 18.4783 | 18.4783 | 18.4783 | 18.4783 |
| DENMARK KRONER | 34.7670 | 57.7132 | 20.6286 | 26.0122 | 6.1524 | 28.1974 | 18.2975 | 208.4477 | 42.8074 | 42.8074 | 42.8074 | 42.8074 | 42.8074 | 42.8074 | 42.8074 | 42.8074 | 42.8074 |
| AUSTRIA SCHILLING | 1.5865 | 2.6337 | 0.9414 | 1.1414 | 0.2808 | 1.2367 | 0.6390 | 9.5122 | 1.6838 | 1.6838 | 1.6838 | 1.6838 | 1.6838 | 1.6838 | 1.6838 | 1.6838 | 1.6838 |
| GREEK DRACHMA | 2.0378 | 3.3627 | 1.2002 | 1.4600 | 0.3606 | 1.9527 | 1.0725 | 12.2178 | 2.2952 | 2.2952 | 2.2952 | 2.2952 | 2.2952 | 2.2952 | 2.2952 | 2.2952 | 2.2952 |
| CYPRUS POUND | 11.8610 | 19.8883 | 7.0078 | 8.5331 | 2.0962 | 8.6158 | 6.2423 | 71.1134 | 13.8061 | 13.8061 | 13.8061 | 13.8061 | 13.8061 | 13.8061 | 13.8061 | 13.8061 | 13.8061 |
| NETHERLANDS GILDER | 1.8001 | 3.1542 | 1.1276 | 1.3670 | 0.3382 | 1.5410 | 1.0000 | 1.1382 | 1.1382 | 1.1382 | 1.1382 | 1.1382 | 1.1382 | 1.1382 | 1.1382 | 1.1382 | 1.1382 |
| PORTUGAL ESCUDO | 206.4860 | 200.4824 | 0.4856 | 0.4856 | 0.4856 | 0.4856 | 0.4856 | 0.4856 | 0.4856 | 0.4856 | 0.4856 | 0.4856 | 0.4856 | 0.4856 | 0.4856 | 0.4856 | 0.4856 |

MAJOR CURRENCIES AGAINST JORDAN DINAR

| CURRENCY | US DOLLAR | EURO | YEN | MARK | FRANC | SCHEFFEL | DRACHMA | SCHEFFEL | SCHEFFEL | SCHEFFEL | SCHEFFEL | SCHEFFEL | SCHEFFEL | SCHEFFEL | SCHEFFEL | SCHEFFEL | SCHEFFEL |
|-------------------|-----------|----------|---------|---------|---------|----------|---------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|
| US DOLLAR | 1.0000 | 1.8900 | 0.9834 | 0.7194 | 0.1770 | 0.8110 | 0.5283 | 0.5866 | 0.5866 | 0.5866 | 0.5866 | 0.5866 | 0.5866 | 0.5866 | 0.5866 | 0.5866 | 0.5866 |
| GERMAN MARK | 0.0024 | 1.0000 | 0.3574 | 0.4334 | 0.1066 | 0.4886 | 0.3170 | 0.3618 | 0.3618 | 0.3618 | 0.3618 | 0.3618 | 0.3618 | 0.3618 | 0.3618 | 0.3618 | 0.3618 |
| FRANCE FRANC | 1.3663 | 2.7978 | 1.0000 | 1.2124 | 0.2862 | 1.3888 | 0.8870 | 1.0483 | 1.0483 | 1.0483 | 1.0483 | 1.0483 | 1.0483 | 1.0483 | 1.0483 | 1.0483 | 1.0483 |
| SWITZERLAND FRANC | 0.8930 | 2.0374 | 0.5348 | 1.0000 | 0.2480 | 0.1257 | 0.7215 | 0.8282 | 0.8282 | 0.8282 | 0.8282 | 0.8282 | 0.8282 | 0.8282 | 0.8282 | 0.8282 | 0.8282 |
| ITALY LIRA | 123.3000 | 204.6780 | 73.1620 | 88.7050 | 21.8191 | 1.0000 | 64.8913 | 736.2800 | 143.8714 | 143.8714 | 143.8714 | 143.8714 | 143.8714 | 143.8714 | 143.8714 | 143.8714 | 143.8714 |
| HOLLAND GUILDER | 1.8001 | 3.1542 | 1.1276 | 1.3670 | 0.3382 | 1.5410 | 1.0000 | 1.1382 | 1.1382 | 1.1382 | 1.1382 | 1.1382 | 1.1382 | 1.1382 | 1.1382 | 1.1382 | 1.1382 |
| SWEDEN KRONA | 0.1978 | 13.3057 | 4.7876 | 5.7853 | 1.4189 | 5.5028 | 4.2187 | 48.0716 | 8.3925 | 8.3925 | 8.3925 | 8.3925 | 8.3925 | 8.3925 | 8.3925 | 8.3925 | 8.3925 |
| FINLAND MARKKA | 16.7900 | 27.8871 | 9.8688 | 11.8995 | 2.9515 | 13.5272 | 8.7780 | 1.0000 | 18.4783 | 18.4783 | 18.4783 | 18.4783 | 18.4783 | 18.4783 | 18.4783 | 18.4783 | 18.4783 |
| DENMARK KRONER | 34.7670 | 57.7132 | 20.6286 | 26.0122 | 6.1524 | 28.1974 | 18.2975 | 208.4477 | 42.8074 | 42.8074 | 42.8074 | 42.8074 | 42.8074 | 42.8074 | 42.8074 | 42.8074 | 42.8074 |
| AUSTRIA SCHILLING | 1.5865 | 2.6337 | 0.9414 | 1.1414 | 0.2808 | 1.2367 | 0.6390 | 9.5122 | 1.6838 | 1.6838 | 1.6838 | 1.6838 | 1.6838 | 1.6838 | 1.6838 | 1.6838 | 1.6838 |
| GREEK DRACHMA | 2.0378 | 3.3627 | 1.2002 | 1.4600 | 0.3606 | 1.9527 | 1.0725 | 12.2178 | 2.2952 | 2.2952 | 2.2952 | 2.2952 | 2.2952 | 2.2952 | 2.2952 | 2.2952 | 2.2952 |
| CYPRUS POUND | 11.8610 | 19.8883 | 7.0078 | 8.5331 | | | | | | | | | | | | | |

Seles, Graf, Tauziat advance; Schnyder falls

VILLANOVA, Pennsylvania (AP) — Monica Seles and Natalie Tauziat, seeded fifth and sixth, and unseeded Steffi Graf advanced to the quarterfinals with victories Thursday in the Advanta Championships.

One seed fell, as No. 7 Patty Schnyder of Switzerland lost to qualifier Amy Frazier 6-3, 6-1.

After easily winning the first set, Seles defeated Japan's Ai Sugiyama 6-3, 7-5. Seles fell behind 4-1 in the second set but rallied to 6-5. Seles used a cross-court return to win the first point of the final game, then swung her powerful backhand to secure three consecutive points.

Seles moves on to face doubles partner

Natasha Zvereva of Belgium in the next round. In the evening session, Seles and Zvereva combined to beat top-seeded Lindsay Davenport and Corina Morariu 3-6, 7-5, 6-3 in doubles.

Graf beat Russia's Elena Likhovtseva 6-7 (5-7), 6-2, 6-4.

Graf dropped a first set that featured eight break points, then dominated the second.

Likhovtseva cut a 5-2 deficit to 5-4 in the third set after winning eight of nine points, but Graf closed with three service points and clinched it on Likhovtseva's double fault.

With the victory and Seles' defeat of Sugiyama, Graf was ensured the 16th

and last spot in the Chase Championships singles field. Sugiyama could have qualified by reaching the Advanta finals.

Tauziat improved her lifetime record against Lisa Raymond to 5-0 in a 6-2, 7-6 (7-4) victory.

Also in doubles, Raymond, from nearby Wayne, Pennsylvania and Australian Rennae Stubbs defeated Lori McNeil and Kimberly Po 6-2, 6-1 to move to the semifinals.

The \$450,000 Advanta tournament is the final event on the WTA Tour before the Chase Championships.

Giants re-sign Burks to \$10m deal

SAN FRANCISCO (AFP) — Free-agent outfielder Ellis Burks, who hit .306 with five homers and 22 RBI over the final two months of the season with San Francisco, Thursday re-signed with the team for two years.

The Giants would not disclose the financial terms, but Burks' agent Jim Turner said it was worth \$10 million.

Burks, 34, was acquired from Colorado on July 31st for outfielder Daryl Hamilton, a free agent who re-signed with the Rockies last week.

Burks, who made \$4.6 million last season, hit .292 with 21 homers and 76 RBI this season in 142 games. Those totals were well off his 1996 and 1997 seasons with Colorado, where he had 72 homers and 210 RBI. Burks had a career year in 1996, hitting .344 with 40 homers, 128 RBI and a league-high 142 runs scored.

"Today's signing of Ellis Burks has significantly improved our run-producing capabilities as a team," said Giants General Manager Brian Sabean. "As we all witnessed last season, Ellis really changes the look of our lineup. There's a lot of teams who would have liked to have a consummate pro like Ellis Burks, and we're gratified that he chose to remain a Giant."



Valeri Belenki of Germany performs on the rings at the international gymnastics competition in Helsinki. Belenki won the competition on the rings and parallel bars (AP photo)

SPORTS IN BRIEF

Timmer, Dutch star of yesteryear, dies

THE HAGUE (AFP) — Henk Timmer, a Wimbledon quarter-finalist and multiple Dutch champion, died Friday at the age of 94. Timmer was a leading light on the tennis circuit in the 1920's and 30's, reaching the last eight at Wimbledon in 1927 and 1929 and taking bronze in the mixed doubles in the 1924 Paris Olympics. Also a talented squash player, Timmer was crowned national tennis champion 23 times.

Mobile stall sell boost Asiad sales

BANGKOK (AFP) — Asia Games have set up mobile ticket stalls in an attempt to help boost flagging sales before the opening on December 6. Games organisers said the booths were set up in Bangkok's central business district and other key points as sales have fallen well below target. Bangkok Asian Games Organising Committee (BAGOC) ticket sales chairman Somchai Neuk Engtrakul said units had been stationed at major banks as well as Don Muang international airport, universities and colleges. Tickets worth 47 million baht (\$1.3 million) have been sold but 10,000 seats are still available for the opening and closing ceremonies on December 6 and 20, officials said.



Marcelo Rios

Rios through at Chevrolet Cup

SANTIAGO, Chile (AP) — Top-seeded Marcelo Rios of Chile gained the quarterfinals of the Chevrolet Cup tennis tournament and strengthened his bid for the No. 1 world ranking with a 6-2, 6-2 victory over Martin Rodriguez of Argentina on Thursday.

Peter Sanpras' first round loss to Jason Stintenberg of Australia in the Stockholm Open could pave the way for Rios' return to the No. 1 ranking if he wins his hometown tournament.

Still, Rios said, he does feel not pressured for the possibility of moving past Sampras.

"I was to play pressured,

I would not play well," he said.

"Besides, all the matches I have ahead here will be difficult."

Felix Mantilla of Spain breezed past Eduardo Medina of Argentina 6-0, 6-1 in also make it to the quarterfinals of the

\$320,000 event.

In other matches, Juan Antonio Marin of Costa Rica beat eighth-seeded Franco Squitieri of Argentina 6-4, 4-6, 6-4 and Jim Courier defeated Dominik Hrbaty of Slovakia 7-6 (7-5), 6-4. As play was to start, a

small group of supporters of former Chilean dictator Gen. Augusto Pinochet gathered at the entrance of the arena with signs protesting Pinochet's arrest in London.

Police asked the demonstrators to leave the area, which they did peacefully.

Rosset rockets women's tennis

MOSCOW (R) — Marc Rosset stroled to a simple straight sets victory in the quarter-final of the Kremlin Cup on Friday before launching an attack on women's tennis.

After beating Slovak qualifier Jan Krosiak 6-2, 6-4 in 49 minutes the Swiss player said: "Apart from four or five female players the rest of women are not in good shape."

"And if you take the best women players they put on nice dresses or have plenty of time during the day to do nothing because women's tennis is really weak."

"But if you look at the men, Pete Sampras, for example, wouldn't have time to go shopping or sightseeing if he wants to stay No. 1," he said.

"This is why I think women's tennis is not that tough. They make huge money with little effort."

Rosset said that women are striving for equality in tennis but that the men's game is far superior.

"I remember that during the Australian

Open the Williams sisters (Venus and Serena) said that they would choose any male player ranked between 200 and 250 and they would beat him easy.

"They chose a guy named Karsten Braasch, who was ranked 200, and he beat them easy, something like 6-1, 6-1 — and he is the only guy on the tour who smokes cigarettes before he steps on the court."

"Until the women can compete with the men I will continue to call them weak."

Jayasinghe at centre of Asian Games drug ban dispute

COLOMBO (AFP) — Top Sri Lankan sprinter Susanthika Jayasinghe was at the centre of an Asian Games drug dispute Friday after a Chinese athletics official claimed she was still banned and could not compete at the event.

Jayasinghe, who won the silver medal in the women's 200m at last year's world championships but also been at the centre of drug accusations, said she knew nothing of the latest threat to her career.

Shang Xiutang, vice director of Chinese Athletics Center, said Thursday the International Amateur Athletic Federation (IAAF) had not lifted a suspension imposed on Jayasinghe after she failed a random drug test in April.

The Sri Lankan athletics authorities said in August a suspension imposed after the test had been lifted. Jayasinghe qualified for next month's Bangkok Asian Games with a time of 11.28sec in the 100 meters at the national championships on November 1.



Thai students dressed in traditional masks wait for their turn to perform during the rehearsal of the opening ceremony of the 13th Asian Games on the night of at the Rajamangala Stadium in eastern suburb of Bangkok. The organisers said that 12,000 students will perform during the opening and closing ceremonies. The games scheduled to begin on Dec. 6 and run to the 20th (AP photo)

Shang, who has just returned to Beijing from an IAAF secretary-general meeting, said the IAAF had received an appeal from the Sri Lankan athletics association over Jayasinghe. China's official Xinhua news agency reported.

The appeal will be handed to the discipline committee on November 20 but Shang said there was little possibility the IAAF could release Jayasinghe for the Asian Games which start on December 6.

However Jayasinghe said she had already signed the entry papers to participate in Bangkok and was confident of winning the 200m gold.

"I don't know what this Chinese official is talking about," Jayasinghe said. "I am fully cleared of any wrong doing and if the ban on me has not been lifted, then I should be the

first to know."

When Sri Lanka's sports authorities announced the suspension had been lifted by the IAAF, they said Jayasinghe had to undergo tests for banned steroids every three months.

She began training in July when a three-member panel appointed here on the request of the IAAF cleared her on a 2-1 vote.

Jayasinghe made her name at the world championships in Athens, where she won the silver medal with a time of 22.39sec, becoming Sri Lanka's first medal winner.

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PLAY OR DEFEND?

Path vulnerable East deals.

NORTH
AK6
QK6
QK10762
QK107
WEST
A72
J53
J4354
A9876
EAST
A98
A7
288
AKKJ432
SOUTH
AKQ10543
K108842
3
A Void

The bidding:
EAST SOUTH WEST NORTH
1NT 2s 1NT Pass
2NT Pass Pass
3NT Pass Pass
Opening lead: Nine of A

Study the diagram above. After the lead of the nine of clubs, would you rather play or defend four spades?

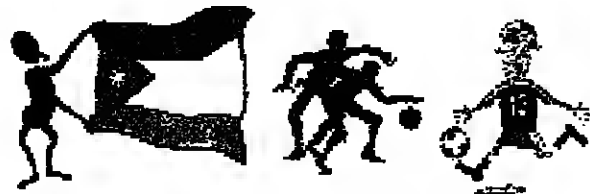
An aggressive South refused to let East-West buy the contract, just as well since that, burning an unlikely outburst, had been the

can be claimed at no trump once the club position shows up. Let's say you elect to declare. You ruff the club opening and lead a heart to the queen of trick two. East wins and returns ace of spades and another. Now you can no longer ruff a heart in dummy and you still have to lose a trick in each red suit — down one. Before you decide to defend, suppose that at trick two, declarer runs the ace of hearts. East wins the ace and plays another club and, with careful timing, repeated club ruffs can wrest trump control from declarer. And if you unblock dummy's queen of hearts before going after trumps, East can score a heart ruff as the setting trick. However, you should still elect to declare. After East wins the ace of hearts and forces you with a club, cash the king of hearts to swallow up the queen of hearts you took so much trouble to establish and ruff heart with the king of spades. If you don't help East to overruff with the ace, but when the king of spades stands up simply lead a trump from the table and all is well. The defender will get their three aces and you'll be

| TODAY AT | PHILADELPHIA '1' | PHILADELPHIA '2' | PLAZA | CONCORD | GALLERIA 1 | GALLERIA 2 | Hisham Yanes re |
|----------|---------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|--|--|---|----------------------------|
| | Lawrence Fishburne & Sam Neill... in | Julia Roberts & Richard Gere... in | Comedian Mohammad Huneidi... in | CONCORD-11 DEEP IMPACT | ABDOUN www.cns.com.jo/Galleria | ABDOUN www.cns.com.jo/Galleria | |
| | EVENT HORIZON | PRETTY WOMAN | SAEEDI AT THE AMERICAN UNIVERSITY | Shows: 12:30, 3:30, 6:00, 8:15, 10:30 | Antonio Banderas... in THE MASK OF ZORRO | Comedian Mohammad Huneidi... in SAEEDI AT THE AMERICAN UNIVERSITY | Watch out for the new play |
| | Shows: 12:30, 3:30, 6:15, 8:30, 10:30 | Shows: 12:30, 3:30, 6:15, 8:30, 10:30 | Shows: 12:30, 3:30, 6:30, 8:30, 10:30 | CONCORD-22 9 1/2 WEEKS Shows: 3:30, 5:30 | Shows: 3:30, 6:15, 8:30, 10:30 | Shows: 3:30, 6:30, 8:30, 10:30 | |

Listings for films and showing times as received by cinemas and their advertising agencies.

LOCAL SPORTS NEWS



Qweismeh Sports City opens today

AMMAN — Deputising for His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan, the Regent, HRH Prince Abdullah will open the Prince Abdullah Sports City in Qweismeh, in eastern Amman today. The event is one of many marking His Majesty King Hussein's 63rd birthday today. The 107-dunum sport city consists of a stadium, meeting rooms, car park and other facilities. Swimming pools, an athletics track and a park would be included later.

Arab sports ministers in Amman

AMMAN — A number of Arab sports ministers will meet next Wednesday in Amman to examine preparations of the next summer's Pan-Arab Games to be held here Aug. 15-31 1999. Games Director Isam Aridah said Bahrain's Chairman of Sports and Youth Council Sheikh Isa Ben Rashid will arrive next Monday. Egypt's Higher Education Minister Mufid Shehab, Arab League Secretary General Assistant Dau Swedan and Director of the Arab League's Youth and Sport Department Hani Mustafa will also be joining.

FIFA president to visit Jordan

AMMAN — FIFA President Joseph Blatter said he would visit Jordan and other Arab countries soon. Blatter told reporters in Manama that an amount of \$1 million will be granted to local federations during the next four years. The mechanism of providing \$250,000 per year to local federations will be discussed next week in Zurich. The amount will not be given unless the federation conducts a project to develop youth soccer activities, Blatter said.

Faisali win U-19 soccer trophy

AMMAN — Al Faisali's soccer team Thursday clinched the Under-19 soccer Championship after beating Al Quazai 2-0. This week Al Faisali will play two friendly matches against Municipality of Greater Amman soccer team and the Zarqa Clubs team on the occasion of His Majesty King Hussein's 63rd Birthday.

Taekwondo team leaves for U.S.

AMMAN — Jordan's military taekwondo team Friday left for the United States to participate in the World Military Championship which starts Sunday. Hassan Salibi headed the delegation which consisted of players Mohammad Nawwaf, Mohammad Falah, Ibrahim Aqel and Husni Mohammad. Saudi Arabia, Lebanon, and Yemen are the only other Arab countries among 18 other countries participating in the seven-day event.

Compiled by Ahmad Khatib

Rusedski reaches Stockholm semis

STOCKHOLM (AFP) — Fourth-seed Greg Rusedski kept his Hanover hopes alive with a hard-fought 7-6 (7/2), 1-6, 6-3 victory over Canadian Daniel Nestor in the quarter-finals of the \$825,000 Stockholm Open Friday. Rusedski, once of Canada but now playing for Britain, needs to reach Sunday's final here to be assured of a place at the end-of-season championships for the world's top eight players starting a week from Tuesday. The World No. 11's battle with Nestor, ranked 104 rungs lower than his opponent, lasted one hour, 45 minutes.

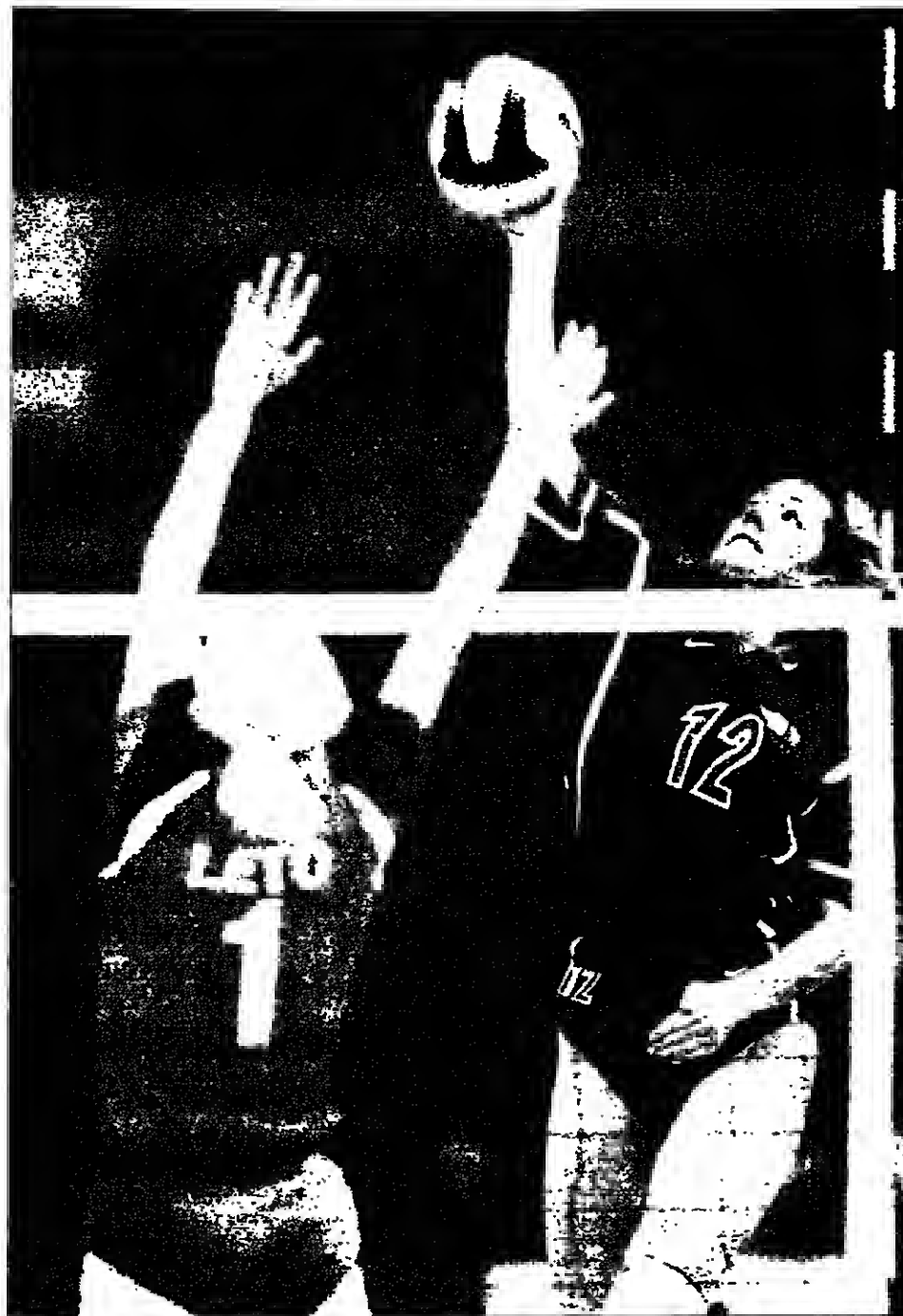
Rusedski, who played on despite hurting a muscle in his back in the final set, was awarded few presents in the battle of the former junior rivals. Rusedski got into trouble in the fifth game when he had to save four break points before escaping for a 3-2 lead after Nestor sent a return long. But Nestor first fought back to force a tie-break — only to be dominated easily by Rusedski — then broke early to take a 2-0 lead and stretch that margin to 5-1 with another break.

He won the last ten points in a row to level the match at a set each. The third set turned on a sixth game which lasted for more than ten min-

utes. Nestor, like Rusedski a left-hander, wasted a 40-0 lead, then had to save four break points against him before Rusedski finally grabbed a 4-2 lead as his opponent netted a volley. Rusedski then served out his next two games for the win. Fellow Briton Tim Henman plays later against Swede Magnus Gustafsson. If Henman reaches the semi-finals he will have booked one of the last two places for Hanover.

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Italian Francesca Piccinini (R) spikes over Croatian defender Natasa Leto (L) during their final round match to choose places of 5th or 6th at the Women's World Volleyball Championships in Osaka. Italy took the match that decided the number five of the 1998 World Championships with a score of 15-7, 15-10, 15-8 (AP photo)

Italy open defence of World Volleyball Championships in style

TOKYO (AFP) — Two-time defending champions Italy opened their campaign in style by beating Canada in straight sets on the first day of the men's World Volleyball Championships on Friday.

Seeking a record third consecutive title, the Italians needed 83 minutes to score a 15-10, 15-13, 15-2 victory in the four-team Group B round robin in Kobe, western Japan. On Saturday, the Italians take on Thailand, who crashed to the world bronze medalists, the United States, 3-15, 9-15, 1-15 in their first match.

Twenty-four countries were divided into six groups

in the preliminary round with the top two teams from each group plus four others advancing to the second round.

Shio Jin-Sik came to the rescue of South Korea in a 15-10, 15-7, 15-6 win over Egypt in Group A in Fukuoka, while China fought hard to beat power-based Ukraine 14-16, 15-13, 15-12, 15-8 in Group C in Sendai.

Yugoslavia, who caused a surprise to win the bronze medal at the Atlanta Olympics, had to overcome jet lag before beating Australia 16-14, 15-5, 15-4 in Group F in the western fishing town of Uozu.

"The result was what I

had expected," said Yugoslav coach Zoran Gajic.

"We didn't have any specific strategy, because we didn't know how the Australians would play. In the first set, we made some mistakes, but in the second set, we understood where we were and found our rhythm," he added.

Russia, fourth in Atlanta, also rallied to a straightforward victory over Turkey 15-6, 15-7, 15-6 in the same group with Yugoslavia.

Argentina outclassed Iran 15-9, 15-3, 15-7 in Group D in Sapporo, and Bulgaria downed Algeria 15-6, 15-12, 15-13 in Group E in Kawasaki.

Bayern well-rested before Stuttgart game

COLOGNE (AFP) — Bayern Munich had an unexpectedly restful week and ideal preparation for Saturday's contest against VfB Stuttgart following the cancellation of Tuesday's match in Borussia Monchengladbach.

A passionate rivalry exists between the two south German clubs with Bayern, as is mainly the case, holding the upper hand.

However, Bayern striker Alexander Zickler, who earned himself a first ever call-up for Germany's friendly against Holland next week, will miss both matches

because of chronic back pain. The club's respected medic Dr Muller-Wohlfahrt administered Zickler 20 injections on Thursday to try and loosen his painfully contracted back muscles.

With Bayern sitting pretty at the head of the table and Stuttgart still smarting from their last minute UEFA Cup exit against FC Ruggen, the

odds are heavily stacked in Bayern's favour.

Stuttgart have only beaten Bayern in Munich once in their last 26 attempts — a 3-1 victory in February 1994.

For true derby action, fans cannot get much better than Saturday's blue collar grudge match between Borussia Dortmund and Schalke 04.

Sports media mourn Nazmi Al Saeed

By a Staff Reporter

AMMAN — Nazmi Al Saeed, one of Jordan's pioneers in sports, passed away Friday at 61 of heart failure.

Al Saeed, whose last post was head of the Jordan Sports Media Federation, was a leading figure of Jordanian sports and youth for the past 40 years, and was dubbed the "country's walking sports encyclopaedia."

His career in sports moved from player to referee and then sports journalist. Since 1975 he led Al Ra'i Arabic daily's sports department.

Minister of Culture and Youth Talal Sataan Al Hassan, Minister of Information Nasser Judeh, and President of the Jordan Press Association Seif Al Sharif mourned the passing of Al Saeed who was also supervising preparations for the coverage of the 9th Pan-Arab Games to be held here next summer.

Al Saeed was one of the earliest soccer and handball players at Al Ahli Club in the early 1950s and is best remembered for being the goalkeeper of the Kingdom's 1957 team at the Beirut Pan-Arab Games. He then obtained his referees badges in soc-



Nazmi Al Saeed

cer and basketball before becoming soccer coach and physical education teacher at the Ministry of Education.

Al Saeed was also head of the sports department at Jordan Radio, president of the Jordan Athletics Federation, president of its referees committee, secretary-general of the Jordan

Football Association and secretary general of Al Ahli Club for many terms. He also founded and became the president of the Jordan Sports Media Federation and was a member of the technical committee of the Arab Athletics Federation. He is survived by his wife, a son and four daughters.

Year likely to get tougher for Novotna

NEW YORK (AFP) — Wimbledon champion Jana Novotna's rough late-season ride could get even rougher next week when she defends her title at the \$2 million WTA Tour Chase Championships.

At Thursday's draw for the season finale at Madison Square Garden, the third-seeded Novotna drew the unlikely task of playing her old nemesis Steffi Graf in the first round.

The five-time champion was assured of a berth when Japan's Ai Sugiyama lost to Monica Seles in the second round of the WTA Tour event in Philadelphia on Thursday. Sugiyama needed to reach the final in Philly to claim a Chase berth.

Irina Spireva of Romania claimed the other spot that was up for grabs on Thursday after world number five Venus Williams withdrew with a knee injury.

Novotna, who lost her first-round match in Philadelphia on Wednesday, said that while she was traveling to New York for the draw she had a premonition that she would end up facing Graf.

"It is just like destiny,"

Novotna said of playing the German, who has been mounting a comeback from a series of leg injuries.

But a tough draw is just part of the game, she said. "You can't really make a choice, you just have to go on and try to play well right from the beginning," said Novotna.

Novotna returned to action this week at Philadelphia but lacking match toughness the Czech veteran lost her first match on Wednesday to Natasha Zvereva of Belarus.

But whatever happens next

week, the result will not be able to dim the soaring success she has enjoyed this season, topped by her victory at Wimbledon for the first Grand Slam singles title of her career.

"This has definitely been the best year of my career," the 30-year-old said.

"Definitely winning Wimbledon was a dream come true and I have wonderful memories from that," she added.

Fourth-seeded Spaniard Arantxa Sanchez Vicario will face Spireva.

World No. 1 and top seed Lindsay Davenport, the U.S. Open champion, will face France's Sandrine Testud in the first round. Martina Hingis, the second seed who was toppled from her world number one perch by Davenport, will face fellow Swiss Patty Schnyder.

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U.S. Air Force Brig. Gen. Bill Lake, commander of the 49th Fighter Wing, discusses his unit's deployment to the Arabian Gulf region on Thursday at Holloman Air Force Base. N.M. Holloman A.F.B. is sending 12 F-117 Stealth fighters and about 250 people to the Arabian Gulf as part of a military buildup in that area, base officials said Thursday (AP photo)

Iraqis line up at gas stations, prices up

BAGHDAD (AP) — Queues of hundreds formed at gas stations and shoppers found some prices up in Baghdad's crowded markets Friday amid widening fears that a U.S. military strike is imminent.

Still, the mood seemed defiant, reflecting the Iraqi government's efforts to forge a united front against U.N. sanctions imposed eight years ago after it invaded Kuwait.

"If we are to attack us, let them do it," said Naima Aidan, 40, as she shopped for sugar and coconut to make sweets for her four children. "I am not worried. God will keep us safe." Preachers at Friday prayers in the nation's mosques called on Arabs and Muslims to rally behind Iraq, despite signs of a loss of support in its confrontation over U.N. weapons inspections.

"I call upon you — all Arabs and Muslims in the world — to declare war on America and its allies," said Abdul Latif Humeim, sheikh of the Abdul Khader Al Gaylani Mosque in downtown Baghdad. "Do not let

their airplanes use your airspace or bases."

"Do not be claws in the hands of Jews and Americans," he added.

The United States and Britain have beefed up their military strength in the Gulf and are threatening to attack Iraq to force it to allow inspections by the U.N. Special Commission, which is responsible for eliminating Iraq's weapons of mass destruction.

The inspectors must certify that Iraq has destroyed those weapons before the U.N. Security Council will lift the sanctions, which have devastated the Iraqi economy by limiting the sale of oil and other trade dealings.

On Thursday, the foreign ministers of six Gulf governments, Iraq's most vulnerable neighbours, along with Egypt and Syria called for a diplomatic settlement. But they also warned in an unusually strong statement that "the Iraqi government is held responsible for any consequences" if it doesn't back

down from its Aug. 5 decision.

Iraqi newspapers, however, ignored the statement, presenting a far different picture to their readers.

"There is condemnation of American threats on both Arab and international levels," read the banner headline of Al Thawra, the paper published by President Saddam Hussein's ruling Baath Party. Despite such rhetoric, there were scattered signs Friday that the Iraqi people were beginning to take the threat of attack seriously.

Long queues formed at gasoline stations as Iraqis filled their tanks — and jerrycans — with fuel. At one station in the capital, about 20 cars were lined up in front of each of its eight pumps.

Taxi drivers said they didn't want to be caught short if the government imposes rationing, as it did during the last standoff over weapons inspections in January and February. There also were fears that the Americans might bomb refineries, reduc-

ing the supply.

Western television crews and photographers were barred by government "minders" from the gas stations, and reporters were told they could not interview people in the queues.

No information was available in Baghdad about military preparedness. But the opposition Iraqi Communist Party said in a statement faxed to Cairo, Egypt, that troops had been moved north to protect oil fields near Kirkuk and deployed along major highways.

At Baghdad's downtown Shorja market, merchants said some prices had increased — a barometer of anxiety here — mainly for perishable goods such as eggs and fresh milk.

Merchants and shoppers said an attack was not their first concern.

"Of course we are worried," said Hamza Ali Turki, 38, as he sold vegetables at Shorja. "But it's not about any kind of aggression. We are all having trouble getting enough money

to buy food," Haidar Saad, 18, a soldier shopping for his family, said he didn't expect any panic buying.

"The markets have stayed open during past crises," he said.

"Anyway, most people live on their [government] rations and don't have the money to stockpile food." The rations are distributed under the U.N.-approved oil-for-food programme which allows Iraq to sell limited quantities of oil to buy food, medicine and other necessities for its 22 million people.

U.N. spokesman Eric Falt said Friday that oil was being exported normally and that ships carrying Vietnamese rice and Australian wheat were being unloaded at the southern Iraqi port of Mina Al Bakr.

Since Wednesday, the United Nations has pulled out of Iraq all its weapons inspectors and a third of the 450 people working on U.N. relief programmes because of the threatened military strikes.

Arabs see U.S., Israel as villains in Iraq crisis

CAIRO (R) — Sympathy for the Iraqi people, if not their leader, ran high in Arab capitals on Friday amid the growing likelihood of U.S.-led military strikes on Iraq.

But Arab governments have blamed Baghdad for the latest standoff with the United Nations, many of their citizens pointed suspicious fingers at the United States and Israel for stirring what they see as an artificial crisis.

Some, openly cynical about Washington's motives, said Iraqi President Saddam Hussein was a useful tool for the United States to squeeze money from oil-rich Gulf states.

"The Iraqi people are not part of the crisis between the United States and Saddam. He is the one who must be punished, not the Iraqi people who haven't any chance to get rid of him," said Hany Morkos, an Egyptian engineer who once worked in Iraq.

In Beirut, few people seemed to believe that large-scale military action was imminent after previous crises fizzled.

"They're doing it to collect the bill," Syrian shoeshiner Ahmad Hisek said of the latest U.S. buildup in the Gulf.

"Every couple of months, they realise that they could do with a bit more money. They're not going to hit Iraq in a big way, maybe just a small strike to save face," Hassan Dakroub, a newspaper stand owner who belongs to the pro-Iranian Hizbollah guerrilla group, said Iran's military manoeuvres earlier this year had prompted the crisis.

"The United States uses Saddam as its bogeyman in the region," he said. "Saddam is the loyal student of the United States, so they won't attack him. Whenever they want money or want to fix their muscles in the region, they tell him to start up a crisis with the United Nations."

Arab leaders made feverish diplomatic efforts to head off threatened military strikes on Iraq earlier this year, when U.N. Secretary General Kofi Annan stitched up a deal with Baghdad to give U.N. inspectors access to so-called presidential sites.

This time, several have said they prefer a diplomatic solution, but the foreign ministers of six Gulf Arab states, Egypt and Syria concluded their meeting this week by saying Iraq would be to blame for any military conflict if it failed to heed U.N. demands over weapons inspections.

Arab governments may feel less willing to stand up for Iraq because of its open defiance of the United Nations and because last month's Israeli-Palestinian agreement reassured them that the United States was still committed to Middle East peace.

But many Palestinians do not see it that way, sharing widespread Arab views that a prejudiced West treats Iraq harshly and handles Israel with kid gloves.

"It's funny to see the United States waving the banner of war against Iraq when Israel violates U.N. resolutions daily," said Lena Hussein, 38, a chemistry teacher from Arab east Jerusalem.

"The issue isn't to dismantle weapons but to make Baghdad bow down to the United States in order for Iraq to rotate with in the American galaxy," she said.

Ali Burhum, 37, a perfume shop owner in the West Bank town of Nablus, said a Gulf conflict could scupper the peace deal.

"If Iraq is hit then Palestinians will mobilise in the streets to support it. Then Israel will find another excuse not to implement peace agreements, claiming that Palestinians still sympathise with Iraqis in striking Israel. It's a mess."

Nadia Musleh, a 35-year-old aid worker in Nablus, said she was not convinced Iraq still had weapons of mass destruction. "I hope the U.S. won't strike Iraq because the Iraqi people are the only ones who suffer, not the regime or Saddam," she said.

In Cairo, agricultural engineer Ahmad Abdul Muneim decried what he perceived as American double standards.

"Why does the United States want to hit Iraq? Because it has mass destruction weapons? Israel also has such weapons and also captured Palestinian lands. Does the United States hit Israel?"

An Egyptian doctor, Sayed Fahmy, said he did not believe there would be a war against Iraq. "This is a scenario to cover Israel for its bluffing on the Wye River agreement [with the Palestinians]. The whole world is supposed to concentrate on the Iraqi crisis and ignore the Palestinian crisis," he said.

In the Gulf state of Bahrain, a businessman who gave his name as Abbas said Washington could remove Saddam if it chose and was behaving unfairly towards the Iraqi people.

"I think the U.S. would like to draw more money from this region, and they won't leave here till they make it completely dry. It's a game for oil or money," he said.

In Yemen, poor cousin in an oil-rich region, some said Gulf Arab states would end up financing any strikes on Iraq.

"Poor Arabs are always being hit by the money of rich Arabs," said merchant Abdul Wali Arif, 45, as he chewed over leaves of qat, a mild stimulant, with friends in Sanaa.

"Saddam is the agent of the United States," said Waleed Emara, a Yemeni civil servant. "He enabled the United States and the West to control the resources and wealth of Arabs."



Lovesick fish an unexpected problem

OSLO (AP) — The Norwegian navy's submarine corps has run into an unexpected problem — lovesick fish — during dives off the nation's coast. Teeming schools of passionate cod, in the midst of a frenzied mating season, make so much noise that the submarine's sonar can't hear anything else, making it almost impossible to navigate under the cold waters of the Norwegian Sea, a defence study said Thursday. The cod grunt repeatedly to attract potential mates. "This is the first time we have registered the frequency of sounds from wild cod," researcher Erling Kjellsby was quoted as telling Norway's largest newspaper, Verdens Gang.

Pilots urge innovative approach toward 'air rage'

FRANKFURT (R) — German airline pilots urged their employers to help avert "air rage" attacks by offering nicotine to smoke-starved passengers and cutting down the amount of alcohol served during flights. George Fongem, spokesman for the main German pilots' association, Cockpit, said passengers drinking too much or getting frustrated by no-smoking rules were two of the main causes of disturbances during flights. "We're not saying we want to stop alcohol being served on planes but we want moderation and we should offer nicotine plasters and chewing gum to help those who find the non-smoking rule difficult," Fongem told a news conference.

Stones tickets go for up to \$600

HARTFORD (R) — The Rolling Stones will play a rare Connecticut concert next March and local ticket agencies are already pricing seats at up to \$600, the Hartford Courant reported on Friday. The band has not played in Hartford since 1981. Details of the Stones' 1999 U.S. "No Security" tour are scheduled to be announced on Nov. 16, but promoters in Connecticut have already announced the Hartford date for March 28. The band's publicists have said average ticket prices for the 1999 tour will be \$75. The Stones charged \$300 for the best seats last January when they played New York's Madison Square Garden, where three sellout shows grossed nearly \$6.4 million.

Cher in line for Cleopatra role

LONDON (AFP) — American singer and actress Cher, currently enjoying a hit record here with her latest single "Believe," is being wooed to play the role of Cleopatra in an upcoming TV movie, her agent said. The 53-year-old veteran star, half of the chart-topping Sonny and Cher duo in the 1960s, could recreate on the small screen the role of the queen of ancient Egypt which was immortalised on the big screen by American Elizabeth Taylor. "It will really depend on her busy schedule whether she is able to take the part," Cher's agent said.

British pilot to get top bravery medal

LONDON (R) — A British navy fighter pilot who guided his plane safely back to its aircraft carrier after its cockpit disintegrated at 12,000 metres is to be awarded a top bravery medal by Queen Elizabeth. Flying high above the Gulf of Aden, miles from his carrier, Lieutenant Martin London's cockpit canopy shattered. "The first thing I knew there was an almighty explosion and there was dust everywhere," he told the Daily Telegraph. "There were pieces of perspex flying around in the cockpit and crashing off my helmet," he said. Descending from 40,000 feet, London managed to send a Mayday message and land his Sea Harrier safely on HMS Invincible.

U.S. ready to send more Patriot missiles to Israel

TEL AVIV (R) — The United States will send Israel additional batteries of Patriot missiles if American forces attack Iraq, an Israeli official said on Friday.

The missiles provided scant protection against Iraqi Scud rocket attacks on Israel during the 1991 Gulf war but have since been upgraded to improve their ability to track and destroy incoming warheads.

Three of the enhanced batteries are already in Israel.

"In case of an emergency or if there is an American attack on Iraq we will get two or three additional batteries supplied from Europe," the official, who asked not to be identified, told Reuters.

Israel opened gas mask distribution centres across the country on Thursday as Washington moved more forces to the Gulf in preparation for a possible military strike on Iraq over Baghdad's blocking of U.N. weapons inspections.

The precaution was accompanied by public assurances from top Israeli officials that the prospects of a retaliatory Iraqi attack on Israel were "close to zero."

Military sources said only about 7,000 Israelis had visited the distribution centres on Thursday but estimated that 400,000 people needed new

supplies of gas masks and chemical and biological weapons defence kits.

The public's seeming non-chalance contrasted with a panic reaction during the previous Iraq crisis in February.

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's government and defence chiefs at the time faced angry criticism for lack of preparation and sending mixed signals over the level of the Iraqi threat.

This time, the government has sought to coordinate information policy and convey confidence and calm.

"We don't view ourselves as part of this conflict nor do we want to be part of this conflict.

But in any case we have the responsibility and the means to defend the state of Israel and its citizens," Netanyahu said on Thursday.

Iraq rained 39 Scuds on Israel in 1991 in attacks that killed one person, wounded scores and damaged property. Iraq has not made any explicit threat to Israel in the latest crisis.

It coincides with U.S. efforts to keep on track a new Israeli-Palestinian interim peace deal meant to break 19 months of deadlock in their negotiations.

Palestinian President Yasser Arafat sent an envoy to Baghdad on Thursday and made clear he opposed the use

of force to end the standoff with Iraq.

"We hope it's resolved peacefully and through negotiations," Arafat told reporters.

Arafat backed Iraqi President Saddam Hussein during the 1991 Gulf war, when many Palestinians living under Israeli occupation in the West Bank and Gaza delighted in Scud missile strikes on the Jewish state.

Arafat's Palestinian National Authority, which controls parts of Gaza and the West Bank under interim peace accords signed since 1993, kept a lid on pro-Iraqi demonstrations in February's crisis.

Ocalan arrested in Italy

ROME (AFP) — Italian authorities Friday said they had arrested Kurdish rebel leader Abdullah Ocalan, who is wanted by Ankara on charges of treason.

Ocalan, head of the separatist Kurdish Labour Party (PKK), which is seeking a homeland for Turkey's Kurdish population, was arrested Thursday at Rome airport at 10:00 p.m. local time after arriving on a flight from Moscow, a police official said.

He said the rebel leader was identified during a routine check by immigration officials who examined the Turkish passport he was carrying. The document was forged.

Ocalan, who was apparently travelling alone, was taken into custody by Italian anti-terrorist police acting on two international arrest warrants against him.

Judicial sources said Italy now had 40 days in which to consider an extradition request for Ocalan.

In Ankara, the pro-Kurdish satellite TV channel Med-TV reported Friday that Ocalan, 49, had applied for political asylum in Italy following his arrest.

Earlier, Turkish Security Chief Necati Bilican told Ankara's NTV that he had learned of the arrest from the Italian authorities and that Ankara would do "anything in our power" to obtain Ocalan's extradition.

He recalled that Ocalan was wanted by Interpol on a Turkish arrest warrant.

Bilican said the PKK leader was being held in a Rome clinic, but Italian authorities would not confirm this.

Ankara last month accused Moscow of harbouring the rebel leader but Russian authorities said at the time they had no information on his whereabouts.

Deputies, however, revealed that Ocalan had urged Moscow to grant him political asylum in a letter sent to the Russian parliament. The PKK leader has been on the move since last month when Turkey and Syria signed an accord, after weeks of tension and threats of military action, under which Damascus agreed it would no longer allow PKK rebels, including Ocalan, to operate from Syrian soil.

The Turkish press last month raised the possibility of Cyprus becoming a new base for Ocalan, but the rumours were quashed by the island's government which made it clear he was not welcome.



A file picture dated 1992 of Abdullah Ocalan

becoming a new base for Ocalan, but the rumours were quashed by the island's government which made it clear he was not welcome.

On Oct. 13, Turkish prosecutors formally demanded the death penalty for Ocalan, on charges of treason. The demand was made at the opening of Ocalan's trial in absentia by the Ankara state security court. Ocalan is charged with committing crimes against the unity and sovereignty of the Turkish state.

Palestinians reject key Israeli demand

Agencies

THE PALESTINIANS on Friday rejected a key Israeli condition for full implementation of their new interim peace deal as U.S. Special Envoy Dennis Ross arrived in Israel to try to keep the agreement on track.

Israel's cabinet narrowly approved the Wye River accord this week but attached a string of conditions.

One is that the Palestine National Council (PNC), the PLO's parliament-in-exile, must hold a vote to scrap clauses in the 1964 Palestinian charter calling for Israel's destruction when it meets in mid-December.

"It is not accurate to say that the PNC will meet to hold a vote on amending anti-Israeli articles in the Palestinian National Covenant," a spokesman for Palestinian President Yasser Arafat said.

Ross was due to hold an informal meeting over dinner with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu. The U.S. diplomat was then scheduled to hold late-night talks with Palestinian President Yasser Arafat in the West Bank

city of Nablus.

The task of Ross and his team of State Department experts is to monitor the implementation by Israel and the Palestinians over the next three months of their obligations under the Wye River land-for-security accord.

The agreement, brokered by U.S. President Bill Clinton and signed in Washington three weeks ago, requires Israel to withdraw from more of the West Bank and take other steps expanding Palestinian autonomy in exchange for tougher Palestinian action against anti-Israeli activists.

The accord should have come into effect on Nov. 2 with the first Israeli troop pullbacks scheduled for next Monday.

Ross' mission coincides with mounting tension in the West Bank following moves by Israel to build more than 1,000 houses at a Jewish settlement site on the edge of Arab east Jerusalem.

The Israeli army said it had imposed a curfew on a market area of the divided West Bank city of Hebron where a grenade had been thrown at soldiers. The grenade did not explode, an army statement

said.

In Nablus, Palestinian police fired shots in the air and forcibly dispersed demonstrators at a rally called by Hamas to protest against the new deal, reporters at the scene said. There were no reports of injuries.

The conduct of next month's PNC meeting has emerged as a key sticking point to implementation of the agreement, which provides for Israel to withdraw from a further 13 per cent of the West Bank in stages over 12 weeks in return for precise Palestinian steps to crack down on anti-Israeli violence.

The Wye deal makes no mention of a ballot. It says the meeting of the PNC and other Palestinian bodies, which Clinton will attend, should "reaffirm" previous decisions to annul the offending clauses.

"The president is committed to the signed agreement and his position on the PNC meeting is exactly what was mentioned in the Wye River memorandum," Arafat's spokesman said, referring to the peace deal signed at the White House last month.

The spokesman, Nabil Abu Rudaineh, dismissed Israeli newspaper reports on

Thursday that said Arafat was ready for the PNC to vote on the nullifications.

In Washington, State Department spokesman James Rubin said the United States expected the PNC to go through "appropriate procedures" at the meeting, but he did not endorse Netanyahu's demand for a vote.

Both Prime Minister Netanyahu and Chairman Arafat signed without conditions and, therefore, we expect the Wye memorandum, which was accepted and contains obligations to be implemented by both sides, to be carried out according to the terms of the agreement," Rubin said.

Netanyahu angered Palestinians on Thursday by going ahead with tenders to build in east Jerusalem's Jabal Abu Gneim, where groundbreaking in March 1997 led to a 19-month freeze in peace negotiations.

The Wye agreement outlaws unilateral changes to the status of the Palestinian territories but Israel says this does not cover its own settlement activity or its hold on occupied Jerusalem.